The Use of Vocative and Imperative Combination in the Opening Lines of Selected Poems in the Hebrew Psalter.

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Abstract

The Use of Vocative and Imperative Combination in the Opening Lines of Selected Poems in the Hebrew Psalter.

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In the past few decades, studies of the biblical Hebrew verse have made invaluable contributions in the understanding of the complex literary and theological traditions of the Psalter. The fundamental question of what makes the text poetry has generated many different literary approaches and linguistic models. It has been long suggested that the hallmark of biblical Hebrew verse is the sense of rhythmic balance that takes place within and between the adjacent lines upon which the structure of the poem unites. While this sense of rhythmic structural balance might be explained by certain descriptive linguistic correspondences and parallelistic phenomena, the regularities of these linguistic markers across the biblical Hebrew verse have yet to be ascertained.

As helpful as recent studies have been, none indicates what constitutes a line of biblical Hebrew verse other than the lineation indicated by the MT accents or that arranged by the editors of the BHS. With the latter one finds that in many instances the proposed textual emendations are metrically motivated, and the former is not always free of errors. Michael P. O'Connor was the first to advance significantly the definition of a poetic line in his Syntactic Description model.

The vocative and imperative combine in the opening lines of 37 psalms in the Psalter. Using the Syntactic Description model, the dissertation investigates how such
vocative-imperative pattern operates in a poem, especially as a way of opening a poem and the effects it might have on the overall articulation, structure, and theological significance of the poem as a whole. The dissertation analyzes the syntactical structures of twenty classic Individual Laments and identifies commonalities beyond the opening lines such as content, mode of speech, and syntactical structure of the lines. Based on these findings, the dissertation suggests a different genre classification for the psalms studied.
This dissertation by Dan Hoang fulfills the dissertation requirement for the doctoral degree in Biblical Studies approved by Joseph Jensen, O.S.B., S.S.L., S.T.D., as Director, and by Robert D. Miller II, Ph.D., and David Bosworth, Ph.D. as Readers.

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David Bosworth, Ph.D., Reader
Table of Contents

Chapter One
Theoretical Considerations and Recent Studies

1.1 Statement of the Problem and Background .................................................. 1
1.2 Purpose........................................................................................................... 3
1.3 Methodology ................................................................................................. 4
1.4 Biblical Hebrew Verse ...................................................................................... 6
1.5 Metrical Systems ............................................................................................. 8
1.6 Parallelism ....................................................................................................... 11
1.6.1 Adele Berlin ............................................................................................... 16
1.7 Studies in Strophes, Stanzas, Similes ............................................................... 20
1.7.1 Petersen and Richards .............................................................................. 20
1.7.2 Hans Kosmala ........................................................................................... 21
1.7.3 Pieter van der Lugt ................................................................................... 25
1.8 Syntactic Studies of Biblical Verse ................................................................. 28
1.8.1 Terrence Collins ....................................................................................... 28
1.8.2 Walter T. W. Cloete ............................................................................... 29
1.8.3 Eric D. Reymond ..................................................................................... 30
1.8.4 Michael P. O'Connor ............................................................................... 31
1.9 Conclusion ...................................................................................................... 39
Chapter Two

Syntactic Description of the Texts of the Twenty Individual Laments

2.0 Introduction ........................................................................................................................................42

2.1 General Description of the Twenty Individual Laments .................................................................47

2.2 Form-Critical Implications in Structure Divisions .............................................................................48

2.2.1 The Work of Westermann ..............................................................................................................48

2.2.2 Gerstenberger, the Problem of Thematically Based Structure Divisions ..............................51

2.3 Syntactical Approach to Structure Divisions: Various Modes of Speeches ...............................54

2.3.1 Summons and General Petition ....................................................................................................54

2.3.2 The Affirmation and Confession Mode of Speech .....................................................................58

2.3.3 The Complaint ................................................................................................................................59

2.3.4 The Petition ....................................................................................................................................64

2.3.5 Praise and Affirmation of Prayer Heard ........................................................................................66

2.4 Syntactic Descriptions and Exegeses of Psalms 26, 54, and 57 ..................................................67

2.4.1 Psalms 26 .......................................................................................................................................67

2.4.2 Psalm 54 .........................................................................................................................................79

2.4.3 Psalm 57 .........................................................................................................................................88

2.5 Syntactic Descriptions of Selected Individual Laments ...................................................................96

Psalm 5 .....................................................................................................................................................96

Psalm 17 ...................................................................................................................................................101

Psalm 35 ...................................................................................................................................................106

Psalm 43 ...................................................................................................................................................113
Chapter Three

Poetic Descriptions of the Twenty Individual Laments

3.0 Introduction ........................................................................................................... 179

3.1.1 Initial Grouping of the Twenty Psalms .......................................................... 181

3.1.2 The Syntactic Constraints of the Lines and Their Distributions ................... 184

3.1.3 The Structures of the Lines and Line Types of the Twenty Psalms ............... 185

3.2.0 Issues Related to Individual Laments as a Genre ........................................ 196

3.2.1 Concerning the Poetic Structure of Petitionary Psalms ................................. 196

3.3 Conclusion ........................................................................................................... 206
Chapter Four

Conclusion

4.0 Introduction .......................................................................................................................... 208

4.1 The Survey .......................................................................................................................... 208

4.2 The Assessment of Syntactic Description Regarding Lineation................................. 210

4.3 The Independence of the Line and Syntactic Ties beyond the Bicolon ......................... 213

4.4 The Syntactic Constraints ................................................................................................. 214

4.5 The Problem of Thematically Based Structure Divisions ................................................. 215

4.6 The Basic Problem of Individual Lament as a Genre .................................................... 216

4.7 Going from Known to Unknown ....................................................................................... 217

4.8 The Opening Lines of Other Psalms in the Individual Lament Genre ........................... 218

4.9 Closing Remarks ............................................................................................................... 221

Bibliography

References .................................................................................................................................... 222

Commentaries ............................................................................................................................. 222

Monographs ............................................................................................................................... 224

Collected Essays and Articles ................................................................................................. 230
## List of Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AB</td>
<td>Anchor Bible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATJ</td>
<td>Asbury Theological Journal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BBB</td>
<td>Bonner Biblische Beitrage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bib</td>
<td>Biblica</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BJRL</td>
<td>Bulletin of the John Rylands Library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BTB</td>
<td>Biblical Theology Bulletin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BZAW</td>
<td>Beiheft zur Zeitschrift fur die Altertestamentliche Wissenschaft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBQ</td>
<td>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CJL</td>
<td>Canadian Journal of Linguistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CC</td>
<td>Continental Commentary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ConJ</td>
<td>Concordia Journal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ConQ</td>
<td>Congregational Quarterly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COT</td>
<td>Commentary on the Old Testament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CovQ</td>
<td>Covenant Quarterly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CR:BS</td>
<td>Currents in Research: Biblical Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTJ</td>
<td>Calvin Theological Journal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DJD</td>
<td>Discoveries in the Judaean Desert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DSS</td>
<td>Dead Sea Discoveries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EAJT</td>
<td>East Asia Journal of Theology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAW</td>
<td>Forschungen Zum Alten Testament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOTL</td>
<td>Forms of the Old Testament Literature</td>
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<tr>
<td>HAR</td>
<td>Hebrew Annual Review</td>
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<tr>
<td>HBT</td>
<td>Horizons in Biblical Theology</td>
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<tr>
<td>HSM</td>
<td>Harvard Semitic Monographs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICC</td>
<td>International Critical Commentary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Int</td>
<td>Interpretation</td>
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<tr>
<td>JANES</td>
<td>Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society</td>
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<tr>
<td>JAOS</td>
<td>Journal of the American Oriental Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JBL</td>
<td>Journal of Biblical Literature</td>
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<tr>
<td>JBQ</td>
<td>Jewish Bible Quarterly</td>
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<td>JBS</td>
<td>Jerusalem Biblical Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>JETS</td>
<td>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</td>
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<td>JNES</td>
<td>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>JSJPHRP</td>
<td>Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Periods</td>
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<tr>
<td>JSOT</td>
<td>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JSOTSup</td>
<td>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series</td>
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<tr>
<td>JSP</td>
<td>Journal for the Study of Pseudepigrapha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JSS</td>
<td>Journal of Semitic Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>KHKAT</td>
<td>Kurzer Hand-Kommentar zum Alten Testament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Title/Full Title</td>
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<tr>
<td>LHBOTS</td>
<td>Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>LS</td>
<td>Louvain Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>LWC</td>
<td>Living Word Commentary</td>
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<tr>
<td>MB</td>
<td>Le monde de la Bible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCB</td>
<td>New Century Bible</td>
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<tr>
<td>NIBC</td>
<td>New International Biblical Commentary</td>
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<tr>
<td>NRT</td>
<td>Nouvelle Revue Theologique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OBT</td>
<td>Overtures to Biblical Theology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OS</td>
<td>Oudtestamentische Studiën</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTE</td>
<td>Old Testament Essays</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTS</td>
<td>Old Testament Studies</td>
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<td>ProEccl</td>
<td>Pro Ecclesia</td>
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<td>Proof</td>
<td>Prooftexts</td>
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<td>PRS</td>
<td>Perspectives in Religious Studies</td>
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<td>PTSB</td>
<td>Princeton Theological Seminary Bulletin</td>
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<td>QR</td>
<td>Quarterly Review</td>
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<td>RevQ</td>
<td>Revue de Qumran</td>
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<tr>
<td>RSR</td>
<td>Revue des Sciences Religieuses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RW</td>
<td>Reformed World</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SB</td>
<td>Subsidia Biblica</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBLDS</td>
<td>Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SJOT</td>
<td>Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TBC</td>
<td>Torch Bible Commentaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TynBul</td>
<td>Tyndale Bulletin</td>
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<tr>
<td>UF</td>
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<td>VT</td>
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<td>VTSup</td>
<td>Vetus Testamentum Supplement Series</td>
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<td>WBC</td>
<td>World Biblical Commentary</td>
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<tr>
<td>ZAW</td>
<td>Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</td>
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Chapter One
Theoretical Considerations and Recent Studies

1.1 Statement of the Problem and Background

For two and a half centuries, since Robert Lowth's 1753 Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews, scholars have continued to gain better understanding of the ancient Hebrew language and its poetic forms. Modern scholars have produced studies on the subject and concluded that parallelism in biblical Hebrew verse is far more complex than Lowth's synonymous, antithetic, and synthetic parallelism.

Linguistic study in the decades from 1970s to 1980s produced several significant works focusing on the literary aspects of biblical Hebrew verse. Among the valuable studies were the works of Terence Collins, Stephen A. Geller, Wilfred G. E. Watson, and Adele Berlin.¹ These works presented various linguistic approaches, involving phonological, grammatical, lexical, and semantic aspects. Unlike previous studies, they advanced the recognition that syntax is important in the studies of biblical Hebrew verse. Yet as exceptional as they are, these studies did not define the constraints on the line.

Michael P. O'Connor's Hebrew Verse Structure filled this gap with its model of Syntactic Description.² Having studied a corpus of twelve-hundred and twenty-five lines

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of biblical Hebrew verse, O'Connor observed that about three-quarters of the lines consist of two or three grammatical elements, each consisting of two or three words.

Linguists and biblicists alike welcomed and received the work with much interest. Experts praised O'Connor's *Hebrew Verse Structure*; Berlin, e.g., said "an impressive book - a synthesis of research in the fields of semitics, linguistics, and literary criticism that takes a giant leap forward in explaining biblical verse." Dennis Pardee welcomed it as "the most important book on Hebrew poetry since Lowth's *Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews*." Yet biblicists have made use of O'Connor's model of Syntactic Description only in a few commentaries and studies of particular prophetic and wisdom texts; for the Psalter, only three articles on three psalms, 23, 31, and 103, have been published. This neglect was perhaps because *Hebrew Verse Structure* is a highly technical work with too

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6 These are the works of Cloete, Dion, and Holladay cited in note 1 above.

many neologisms. What is necessary, therefore, is the application of the Syntactic Description to a definite corpus of psalmic texts.

1.2 Purpose

The Syntactic Description model can be useful in analyzing the structural patterns of specific groups of psalms. For example, a group of thirty-seven psalms in the Psalter found their commonality in the combination of vocative and imperative in the opening cola. Using O'Connor's Syntactic Description model, the proposed research will investigate how such a combination operates in a poem, especially as a way of opening a poem, and what effects it might have on the articulation, structure, and theological significance of the poem as a whole.

Below are the thirty-seven psalms referred to, given in accord with Gunkel's genre classifications:  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Psalm of Confidence:</th>
<th>4, 16</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual Lament:</td>
<td>5, 17, 26, 35, 43, 51, 54, 55, 56, 57, 59, 61, 64, 69, 70, 86, 102, 140, 141, 143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hymn:</td>
<td>29, 33, 103, 104, 117, 134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wisdom:</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enthronement Song:</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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10 I have included Psalm 70 to this list in light of Ps 70:2b and Ps 40:14.
Individual Thanksgiving: 66, 100
Royal Psalm: 72, 132
Legend: 78
Communal Lament: 12, 80

1.3 Methodology

The proposed dissertation presents a two-fold thesis: 1) that these thirty-seven psalms, specifically the twenty Individual Laments, have other similar structural features beyond the opening line, and 2) that the contents of these poems are structured differently than those composed without such an opening combination of vocative and imperative.

I will test this thesis on the twenty Individual Laments identified above because, numerically, they account for more than half of the thirty-seven psalms referred to. This particular genre also occupied nearly a third of all the psalms in the Psalter.

The dissertation will have four chapters:

Chapter One summarizes the present discussions of biblical Hebrew poetry in order to clarify why syntactic analysis, particularly O'Connor's Syntactic Description, is needed and what it is.

Chapter Two assesses the structures of the twenty Individual Laments referred to. This chapter asks the following questions:

1. What are the themes and topics of these psalms?
2. What do they have in common besides the above mentioned syntactic construction in the opening lines?
3. Will O'Connor's definition of a line hold true for this set of new texts?
In the first part of this chapter, I will present brief exegetical comments on three Individual Laments, Psalms 26, 54, and 57. I selected these three psalms because they exemplified the basic prayer forms having this basic structural scheme: address, petition, and praise.\textsuperscript{11} I will assess the syntactic structures of these three psalms at the levels of words and lines. The second part of the chapter presents the gross structures of the remaining seventeen psalms.

Chapter Three assesses important similarities and dissimilarities in the structures of Psalms 26, 54, and 57 compared with the rest of the twenty Individual Laments referred to, and subsequently, with other Individual Laments in the Psalter.

Chapter Four evaluates the method and summarizes the findings concerning the texts studied.

\textsuperscript{11} Gunkel, \textit{Introduction}, 194; according Gunkel, the structure of Psalms 54 has the resemblance of the oldest form of the individual complaint songs. Psalm 26 has no complaint motif.
1.4 Biblical Hebrew Verse

Most of us can tell the difference between poetry and prose when we read or listen to a discourse in our own language. We cannot do the same with biblical Hebrew verse because we do not know enough about biblical Hebrew poetry; the text of Jeremiah is one example. Undoubtedly, the cuneiform hymnic literature of Mesopotamia, the Ugaritic material, and the Qumran Psalms have been invaluable sources for comparative studies. Yet much remains unknown about the origin, form, and function of the biblical psalms. One assumption is that the patterns of biblical psalms might have originated from the period of early Israel's tribal stage. The ancient Israelites might have articulated their prayers orally in poetical forms and shared them among families and friends, and these prayers were then later edited in written verses and used in larger religious communities. The two forms of poetry, oral and written, while having the same content and meaning, are two different types of medium and format. The oral format could have been articulated in different modes of intonation in accord with various settings and traditions, while the written format would be fixed. To date, linguistic research on the oral format remains largely neglected.

The attempt to recover the original poetic forms of the ancient biblical verse requires a complete knowledge of the original system of poetry of the biblical language.

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Besides the required native competency in the ancient language, this knowledge requires not only the mastery of the written poetic forms of the ancient biblical verse, but also knowledge of how the ancient Jewish people articulated them orally. Sadly, such knowledge is lost for no treatise on the ancient art of biblical verse exists, and the original text of the OT and its phonological aspects are lost. What we have with respect to the oral form of the biblical verse is the invention of the Masoretic-Tiberian system of vowel pointing and accents that is more than a millennium later than the time the ancient Hebrew Psalms were first spoken.

The first task of the inquiry into biblical verse is to define the linguistic functions and properties that make the text poetry. In the search for the descriptions of the biblical Hebrew verse, scholars seek to identify the linguistic patterns that regulate its rhythmic structural quality. For many, a simple way is to identify the phonological patterns of the poems; these scholars believe that such patterns can be identified through the inquiries of the metrical and strophic schemes. The search began long ago by early scholars, Philo and Josephus, who were familiar with the metrical systems in the classic Greek traditions.
1.5 Metrical Systems

As controversial as it is, the topic of meter has continued for centuries to generate many studies and reviews. Scholars claimed various types of metrical models: accent counting, syllable and accent counting, alternate stress counting, syllable counting, letter counting, and word counting models. Of these, the most popular metrical model is the accent counting, accredited to J. J. Bellerman, K. Budde, E. Sievers, J. Ley, and H. Ewald from the early 19th century to the turn of 20th century. Ley claimed that the characteristic feature of the bicolon of Hebrew poetry is the number of tones or accented syllables regardless of the number of unaccented syllables.

Is the biblical Hebrew verse regulated by metrical systems? In his Classical Hebrew Poetry (1984), after having rejected various criticisms against the metrical

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14 See the encyclopedic work of W. G. E. Watson, Classical Hebrew Poetry: A Guide to its Techniques. (JSOTSup 26; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1984); also Alonso L. Schökel, A Manual of Hebrew Poetics (trans. Adrian Graffy; SB 11, Rome: Biblical Institute, 1988). The syllable-accent counting system adopted by David Noel Freedman is a modified Qinah meter that was developed by K. Budde in 1892; cf. David Noel Freedman, “Acrostics and Metrics in Hebrew Poetry,” HTR 65 (1972) 367-92. In a more recent study, Freedman and Miano analyzed Psalms 20, 58, 100, 103, and 105 using the same method; they observed that the numbers of syllables and stresses per line fluctuate between eight syllables-three stresses per line to ten syllables-four stresses per line; cf. David Noel Freedman and David Miano, “Non-acrostic Alphabetic Psalms,” in Book of the Psalms, Composition and Reception (eds., Peter W. Flint and Patrick Miller; London: Brill, 2005) 87-96. For a good critique of syllable counting metrical system, see George Buchanan Gray, Forms of Hebrew Poetry Considered with Special Reference to the Criticism and Interpretation of the Old Testament (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1915) 137-54.

15 Many have accepted this method of accent-counting system, proposed by Julius Ley in his Grundzüge des Rhythmus, des Vers und Strophenbaues in der hebraischen Poesie, 1875. Ley first held that a line of Hebrew poetry consists of the number of accented syllables regardless of the number of unaccented syllables (e.g., the meter of a bicolon is presented as $3 + 3 = \text{two cola of 3 accents per line}$, or $2 + 2 + 2 = \text{three cola of 2 accents per line}$. The same view is held by Sievers, " Metrische Studien," and " Studien zur heb raischen Metrik " in Abhandlungen der philist. Classe der kaniglich sachischen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften (1901); also in his Hebrew Genesis Rhythmically Arranged (1904). Modern scholars like Frank Moore Cross, David Noel Freedman, and Michael Dahood, among others also have adopted and modified this metrical model.
systems, Watson opted for J. Ley's accent counting system,\textsuperscript{16} saying that scholars have failed to “distinguish between metre as actually present in verse, and \textit{regular} metre.” According to him, “there is metre, yes, but not regular metre, since metrical patterns are never maintained for more than a few verses at a stretch, if even that.”\textsuperscript{17} However, some ten years later Watson countered his own view, saying: “my own view is that metre, if it is present, should be transparent and obvious.”\textsuperscript{18}

The presence of various theoretical models, each having its own unique technique, indicates that the subject of meter is controversial. Perhaps, the study of meter is becoming less popular among biblicists because the proposed models did not show a reasonable degree of regularity and consistency across the texts studied. In addition, the overwhelming presence of verses that do not fit into any prescribed patterns argues against the possibility of a metrical system. Undoubtedly, the task of finding some consistency and regularity of specific syllabic, accent, and stress patterns over the large corpora of the diverse ancient poetic materials preserved by the Masoretes that can accurately describe ancient biblical verse is rather difficult, if not impossible.\textsuperscript{19}

Gray observes,


\textsuperscript{17} Watson, \textit{Classical}, 97-98.


\textsuperscript{19} For a general discussion of textual history, see E. Würthwein, \textit{The Text of the Old Testament} (trans. E. F. Rhodes; Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1995) 11-44. Würthwein points out: 1) the pronunciation might have changed over time because the Masoretic Tiberian tradition is separated from the ancient Hebrew language for more than a millennium, 2) there are differences in pronunciations within the Masoretes of the ben Asher and ben Naphtali families, 3) the Greek and Latin transliterations of the early Hebrew texts do reflected different pronunciations from the Masoretic Tiberian tradition.
I have no new theory of Hebrew metre to set forth; and I cannot accept in all its
details any theory that others have elaborated. In my judgment, some
understanding of the laws of Hebrew rhythm has been gained: but much still
remains uncertain. 20

Therefore, O'Connor states, “no consensus has ever been reached in the matter of
Hebrew meter because there is none.” 21 So also Kugel,

Nearly two thousand years of scanning, syllable-counting, and the like have failed
to yield a consistent metrical system in them – certainly nothing to which the
terms “hexameters,” “pentameter,” or “trimeter” might be meaningfully applied. 22

Without having convincingly identified a meter system, how would then scholars
differentiate biblical verse from prose? This leads to the issues of parallelism.

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20 Gray, Forms, vi. For a critical view against metrical systems, see Johannes C. de Moor’s “The Art of
Versification in Ugarit and Israel: The Rhythical Structure,” in Studies in Bible and the Ancient Near East
Presented to Samuel E. Loewenstamm on his Seventieth Birthday (ed. Yitschak Avishur and Joshua Blau;
Metrics,” in Ugarit in Retrospect: 50 Years of Ugarit and Ugaritic (ed. G. D. Young; Winona Lake, IN:
New Approach,” in Poetry in the Hebrew Bible: Selected Studies from Vestus Testamentum (compiled by
22 James L. Kugel, Idea of Biblical Poetry: Parallelism and its History (New Haven: Yale University Press,
1981) 141.
1.6 Parallelism

In an attempt to reconcile the tension between two different rabbinic schools of thoughts on the issue of meter, Rabbi Azariah dé Rossie proposed that the basic elements of biblical Hebrew meter are the number of ideas, i.e., number of words, and not the numbers of syllables and stresses.\(^{23}\) Azariah dé Rossi's idea has cleared a new path for an exit from metrical studies. His claim gives way to the focus on the linguistic sense, i.e., the characteristic of biblical Hebrew verse. Leading the way was Bishop Robert Lowth.

In his 1778 *Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews*, Lowth's comments on the lexical and grammatical correspondences between couplets provided the fundamental principles for many linguistic approaches to the biblical verse,

> The correspondence of one verse, or line, with another, I call parallelism. When a proposition is delivered, and a second is subjoined to it, or drawn under it, equivalent, or contrasted with it, in sense; or similar to it in the form of grammatical construction; these I call parallel lines, and the words or phrases, answering one to another in the corresponding lines, parallel terms. Parallel lines may be reduced to three sorts: parallels synonymous, parallels antithetic and parallels synthetic.\(^{24}\)

Lowth's theory has standardized the bicolon as the basic building block of biblical Hebrew verse. For the past two and a half centuries to the present time, many inquiries

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into the biblical Hebrew verse started out with the presupposition that parallelism is the hallmark characteristic of biblical verse.25 Yet the majority of past studies have grounded Lowth's definition of parallelism exclusively in the semantic correspondences which he referred to as sense. Many biblical scholars, misled by Lowth's definition of parallelism, have neglected the form of grammatical construction, which are the morphological and syntactical correspondences. Roman Jakobson points out:

The role performed by “figure of grammar” in world poetry from antiquity up to the present time is still surprising for students of literature a whole century after it was first pointed out by Hopkins. The ancient and medieval theory of poetry had an inkling of poetic grammar and was prone to discriminate between lexical tropes and grammar figures (figuae verborum), but these sound rudiments were later lost.26

At the rise of modern literary critical criticism, many scholars have moved away from Lowth's definition of parallelism and investigated the parallelistic phenomena using different linguistic approaches and theories. Many good insights have been drawn from the early Ugaritic materials and the later Hebrew and Aramaic literatures of the apocrypha and pseudepigrapha from the second century BC to the second century AD.27

27 For example, Ecclesiasticus, Maccabees, Judith, Psalms of Solomon, Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, Jubilees, and Apocalypse of Ezra/4 Ezra. One important work is James Kugel, Idea of Biblical Poetry: Parallelism and its History (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981). In chapters 3-6 of his book, Kugel provides a wealth of information on the history of the studies of biblical Hebrew verse since the rabbinic time up to the Renaissance period. For a good survey of the origin of the ideas of parallelism since the second century AD, see the introductory chapter of Gray, Forms of Hebrew, 23-30.
In addition, the studies of Qumran materials are also important contributions to the linguistic studies of biblical verse.28 Equipped with modern linguistic tools, scholars reckoned that biblical Hebrew verse is far more complex than Lowth's synonymous, antithetic, and synthetic parallelism.29 They challenge the core of Lowth's theory, which is grounded on the belief that the contiguous character of the parallelismus membrorum of the bicola/tricola and meter characterized the biblical Hebrew verse. O'Connor argues that the Standard Description needs drastic revisions, charging that Lowth's Standard Theory is “both linguistically inadequate and heuristically worn out (i.e. it is wrong and useless).”30 O'Connor asserts that the Standard Description does not adequately describe the rhythmic structure quality of biblical Hebrew verse because of these three major flaws:31

1. The Standard Theory focuses on the bicolon as the only real unit was an important deterrent to the study of the whole poem because it erroneously describes poems as structureless assemblages of uniform bicola.

2. The Standard Theory erroneously absolutizes the bicolon as the basic building block. This claim is false because the pairing of cola is almost absolute, but


\*29 For a good critique on Lowth’s synthetic parallelism, see Gray, *Forms of Hebrew*, 48-50.


not quite, even in certain types of verses, e.g., Proverbs, Job, and Psalm 119, where an overwhelming regularity of the pairing of cola occurred.

3. The Standard Theory falsely defines parallelism as a narrowly lexical phenomenon.

Another prominent opponent of the Standard Theory is Kugel. Rejecting Lowth's description of parallelism, Kugel concurs with many modern scholars who have realized that Lowth's idea of synthetic parallelism is erroneous because it serves as a catchall category in cases the cola do not fit into the first two categories. Kugel aptly point out that Lowth's synonymous category is linguistically inadequate because it implies that the paralleled cola contain two identical statements, i.e., saying the same thing twice.32

Noting the inadequacy of the Standard Theory, recent inquiries into the phenomena of parallelism in biblical verse have resulted in many literary types and categories of parallelism (e.g., antithesis, centripetal/centrifugal, parallelism of greater precision, among other types of parallelism).33 Berlin sees parallelism as the correspondences of linguistic equivalences involving all linguistic aspects, i.e., lexical, grammatical, semantic, and phonetic aspect. Along this approach is Pardee; he defines four types of parallelism: repetition, grammatical (morphology and syntax), semantic, and phonetic. For O'Connor, parallelistic phenomena can take place between two adjacent cola, and between remote cola. The latter is a major difference between

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O'Connor's and the conventional understanding of parallelism, i.e., the pairing of two adjacent cola.\textsuperscript{34}

Like the metrical theories, past and present approaches to parallelism suffered the wide gaps of theoretical differences. These differences indicate that biblical Hebrew verse remains elusive. Kugel aptly observes,

Most important is to stress that the taxonomic approach to parallelism has in the past proven largely futile, and that the multiplication of categories of semantic or other parallelism has had a particularly diverting, and therefore negative, effect on an overall understanding.\textsuperscript{35}

Nonetheless, recent proposals of various linguistic models have shown much progress in the understanding of biblical Hebrew verse. Scholars have expanded and modified previous studies; using modern tools across linguistic spectrum, they claimed that the phenomena in poetic forms and characters might be universal and that they might not be restricted to biblical verse alone, as once believed.

After more than twenty years the works of Berlin, Geller, Greenstein, Kugel, Pardee, Watson, among others, continue to be useful resources for understanding parallelism.\textsuperscript{36} These studies have received much attention and generated many insightful reviews. It is not necessary to present a complete account of every theoretical model dealing with parallelism. The intention here is to provide a brief survey of studies deemed significant to the goals of this investigation.

\textsuperscript{34} O'Connor calls these parallelistic phenomena “tropes,” O'Connor, \textit{HVS}, 96.


\textsuperscript{36} These works have been cited in note 1.
1.6.1 Adele Berlin

Some twenty-five years after its publication, many still consider Berlin's *Dynamic of Biblical Parallelism* as the best textbook for understanding the phenomena of parallelism in biblical Hebrew verse. According to Berlin, a poem is constructed within the parameters of two main characteristics: terseness and parallelism. Drawing insights from R. Lowth, H. Clark, J. E. Deese, T. van Dijk, and R. Jakobson, Berlin approaches biblical Hebrew verse by investigating parallelism. Berlin proposes that the activation of both lexical (phonology and semantics) and grammatical (morphology and syntax) aspects form parallelism.

Berlin describes semantic parallelism using psycholinguistic theories of word association in paradigmatic and syntagmatic categories. The former describes the semantic relations and the latter syntactical functions of the words; Berlin describes these categories in terms of fixed word-pairs. The phonological parallelism is the repetition and contrast of sound pairs of identical or same consonants excluding vowels.

According Berlin, grammatical parallelism is the alternation of grammatical structure in parallel stichs, or the pairing of two different grammatical structures in parallel stichs. Berlin sees grammatical parallelism as having two subdivisions: morphological and syntactical. Morphology deals with the individual words in the sentence. It is the pairing of word pairs from different morphological classes (noun, pronoun, relative clause, prepositional phrase, adverb, substantive, and verb), or from the

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same morphological class with different morphological components (different tense, conjugation, gender, and number).

Syntactic parallelism deals with different syntactic construction patterns in the sentence/stich as a whole. According to Berlin, syntactic parallelism consists not only of the pairing of two identical syntactic constructions but it also involves the transformation that takes place not in “the original sentence that has been transformed, but rather another, unrealized sentence that is parallel to it.”38 Berlin gives examples from various corpora illustrating four main types of transformations that she calls syntactic parallelism.

The first type is Nominal-Verbal syntactic parallelism. Berlin cites Micah 6:2b to illustrate:

כָּ֖ר רֶ֣בֶע לָ֣ו הַמַּהֵ֑ו עַ֚ם יִשְׂרָאֵֽל יִתְוַֽכָּח

For Yhwh has a case against his people; And with Israel he will dispute.

In close observation, there are other layers of syntactic correspondences in the above two sentences besides the Nominal to Verbal transformation, e.g., words association of “my people” and “Israel,” repetition of particle עַ֖ם and the use of prepositional phrases and their positions in the couplet. The observations point out the difficulty in the classification of parallelism.

The second category is Positive-Negative syntactic parallelism; Berlin gives this example of Proverb 6:20:

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38 Berlin, Dynamic, 53.
Keep, my son, the commandment of your father
And do not forsake the teaching of your mother;

Again, the above two cola syntactically show more than just Positive-Negative transformation. Note how the second-person singular imperative נְצִֹּר relates to the second-person singular non-perfective negative prohibition וְאַלֽתִ֝טֹ in the next line.³⁹

Note also the word associations of the construct chains מִצְוִַּ֣ת אָבִי and תּוֹרַַ֥ת אִםֶּ and their grammatical slots in the sentences.

The next two categories are Subject-Object and Change in Grammatical Mood parallelism. They, too, exhibit the same problems as the preceding two categories.

These observations illustrate the problems in the defining and classifying the types of parallelism. In fact, they challenge the ideas of parallelism as the hallmark of biblical Hebrew verse.

Moving on to Berlin's other idea of parallelism, the relationship between the linguistic elements, that which is distilled and condensed within the cola, is what makes poetry.

A poem distills and condenses its message, removing "unnecessary" words and leaving only the nucleus of thought. At the same time, without losing its terseness, it constructs relationships between its parts such that the final product is unified.⁴⁰

³⁹ In the next chapter of the dissertation, I will show that this type of construction, i.e., the imperative-vocative clause in the first line followed by perfective or non-perfective clause in the second line is quite common in the Psalter.
⁴⁰ Berlin, Dynamic, 6.
Berlin sees two main characteristics in a poem: terseness and parallelism. For her, all aspects of grammatical and lexical accounts play equal roles in the formation of parallelism and, in effect, the unity of a poem. The problem with this assertion is that Berlin's proposal of parallelism only accounts for the linguistic correspondences that occur within and between the two adjacent cola, not between the remote cola, and certainly not the entire poem. Therefore, it is difficult to see how the cohesiveness, if any, of the surface structure of the two adjacent cola in parallel extends its connectedness to the whole poem.

Berlin's global view on the construction of parallelism ignores the important question of what comes first. Is it the selection of words that dictates syntactic construction of a line, or is it the syntax that regulates terseness and calls for the selection of words? Her global view is in tension with Jakobson's linguistic theoretical principles and insights that she has drawn from. For Berlin, the parallelistic phenomena of grammatical and lexical correspondences take place at the same time. Perhaps this is a main difference between Berlin's, O'Connor's and Collins' proposals, for O'Connor and Collins both held that the governing force of Hebrew poetry is syntax. O'Connor's idea about the constraints on the line, and the working of the tropes that describe the syntactic correspondences within and between cola might have some parallels with Berlin's idea of the construction of the cola described in terms of terseness and parallelism. Berlin's work raises these questions about parallelism:

1. How does the parallelism of the two adjacent cola contribute to the structural unity of the poem?
2. What linguistic elements and correspondences, contained within a cola, can serve as the determining criteria in identifying and classifying types of parallelism?

3. How predominant is parallelism as a phenomenon in biblical verse versus prose?

4. What are the function and effect of parallelism with respect to the understanding of the text?

Berlin's *Dynamic of Biblical Parallelism* won high praise for pointing out various grammatical phenomena related to parallelism in the biblical verse. However, unless one can confirm the predominance of certain types of parallelisms in a given text or in a corpus of texts, students of biblical verse soon realize that the topic of parallelism is no less controversial than the topic of meter because “parallelism is not indicative of poetry since prose, too, uses parallelism.”

41 Watson, *Classical*, 50.

predictability. Petersen and Richards hold that biblical verse should be thought of in terms of rhythmic patterns instead of meter.\textsuperscript{43} It is difficult to assess their view on meter and rhythm. In the introductory chapter, it seemed that they have argued against the ideas of grounding one's metrical analysis on the Masoretic pointing system:

So, when one attempts to determine the rhythm of a Hebrew poem, one must remember that the Masoretic text's vocalization includes a phonology, a system of sounds, that may not reflect the poem's original form. Adding to, subtracting from, or revising the sound and spelling of a word or line affects fundamentally the way it works rhythmically.\textsuperscript{44}

Petersen's and Richards' assessment of parallelism is also difficult. According to them, parallelism “occurs in the interaction of semantic and grammatical equivalence and opposition [this part comes from Lowth and Berlin]. The juxtaposition of an A and B provides the opportunity for an almost infinite number of correspondences [this is partly from Kugel].”\textsuperscript{45} Petersen's and Richards' broad description of parallelism has made it more than a hallmark of biblical Hebrew verse, for the possibilities of correspondences between the cola are almost infinite.

1.7.2 Hans Kosmala\textsuperscript{46}

Kosmala was among the first to quantify the cola in term of the number of units, i.e., he counts a word as a unit. Unconvinced by the Masoretic vocalization and accentuation system, Kosmala rejects the metrical models; he argues that these theoretical

\textsuperscript{41} Petersen and Richards, \textit{Interpreting}, 42-43.
\textsuperscript{42} Petersen and Richards, \textit{Interpreting}, 5.
\textsuperscript{43} Petersen and Richards, \textit{Interpreting}, 35; comments in brackets are mine.
models require unnecessary and radical textual emendations. Kosmala sees similarities between various biblical prophetic corpora and Ugaritic poems with respect to regularity in the structure of the cola, claiming that the same structural regularity also occurred in many of the Hebrew psalms, for they too followed similar rules.

Kosmala holds that the smallest member of a poetic line is a unit. A unit is a constituent, that is, everything that can be expressed by one essential word, any noun, verb, pronoun, adjective, adverb, a numeral. Any essential word and its suffix in the sentence represents one unit (definite object marker, particles, prepositions, unless they have a suffix designating a person or an object are excluded).\footnote{Kosmala, Form, 426. Similarly, Theodore Robinson emphasized the importance of the word-unit in his article, "Some Principles of Hebrew Metrics," ZAW 54, (1936) 28-43.} A couplet consists of six units in most cases, but also five to eight units are quite frequent. Having examined certain poetic pieces from the book of Isaiah and other prophetic corpora, Kosmala claims that these two principles define a poem in strict correspondence between its outward form and inner structure:

1. The regularity of the number of thought units, i.e. words, of a sentence forms a complete and self-contained line regardless of the numbers of stresses (line = couplet).

2. A line of a certain length corresponds to another line of equal length.\footnote{Kosmala, Form, 424.}

Kosmala's definition of structure of a poem is vague. He believes that the use of two parallel clauses in a line, and the close correspondences between the form, and the arrangement of ideas in the composition as a whole create parallelism between and within
the couplets. Citing various examples in First Isaiah, minor prophets, and the Psalter, Kosmala proposes two basic poetic forms: 1) oracles and 2) poems with progressive and symmetrical stanzas.

According Kosmala, the simplest form of poetry appears in oracles. This form consists of between two to five cola/couplets. One example he gives is Numbers 24:16-17:

נְאָמ נְאָמ שֹׁמֵעַ אִמְרֵי אֵל
וְיֹדֵעַ דִַּ֣עַת עֶלְיִוֹן
מַחֲזִ֤ה שַדַי יֶּחֱזֶ֔ה
נֹפֵֵ֖ל וּגְלַ֥וּי עֵינָּיִם׃
אֶרְאֶ֙מוּ֙ וְלִּ֣א עַתָּ֔ה
אֲשׁוּרֵ֖מוּ וְלִ֣א קָרִ֑וֹב
dark\n
The oracle of the listener of the words of God,
And knows the knowledge of the Most High.
He sees the vision of the Almighty,
Falling down, and his eyes uncovered.
I see him, but not now.
I behold him, but not near.
A star has marched forth from Jacob;
A scepter shall rise from Israel.
And shall shatter the sides of Moab,
And the crown of the heads of all the sons of Sheth.
Kosmala believes that “in symmetrically constructed poems, the first line corresponds to the last, both in length and in content, the second line to the last but one, and so forth. The central axis is the middle of the poem; it is an individual line that may carry the main message of the poem.”

In trying to establish this pattern of chiastic construction and symmetrical balance between the cola, Kosmala left out not only words but also cola. He incorrectly starts counting at v. 16 instead of v. 15b, and ends Balaam's first saying at v. 17 instead of v. 19, thus forcing the oracle to fit into five cola of the same length of six units each. He argues for a chiastic construction of the oracle, saying that the first two cola, v. 16, belong together; so do the last two cola. This grouping leaves v. 17a as the central axis between the two pairs.

Clearly, though the oracle does not scan as Kosmala has claimed, quantitatively the cola fall within the range of two to three words per line. In a closer look at Numbers 24:15-24, several observations can be made:

1. The four prophecies of the oracle do not align with the Masoretic divisions.
2. The connectedness and contiguity of the bicola are not consistent.

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49 Kosmala, *Form*, 433-44.
50 Actually, Balaam's fourth and last oracle contains four sayings on different topics (vv. 15b-19, v. 20b, vv. 21b-22, and vv. 23b-24), each saying is marked with the direct quotation frame “and he lifted up his discourse and said” which occurs at vv. 15a, 20a, 21a, and 23a.
3. The relative independent character of the cola is shown in vv. 18-19, and 23-24.

4. The tendency of taking the cola/distich as the absolute basic unit hinders one from assessing the working of the larger units of the poem.

Kosmala's chiastic structural analyses are subjective; but his study indicates the focus on the localized reading of individual parts/members of the cola and the relationships between them, which in turn form the structure of the sentences and the entire poem as the result.

Kosmala's quantification of the couplet prompts this basic question: Does it make any difference whether a couplet contains five, six, or eight words? On the one hand, it does not, unless the number of words in the cola stay constant in a certain textual tradition or genre (to be sure they do not), such that one may identify some sort of a rhythmic pattern. On the other hand, it does point out quantitatively the character of the structure of a couplet within the prescribed range of the number of words, i.e., five to six in most cases, and can be up to eight in rare cases. Recalling, also, what have been averaged in various metrical model analyses (four to six accents per bicolon, one accent per word), one now has some idea about what Berlin called terseness. In this respect, Kosmala's essays serve as a second stepping-stone, after dé Rossie. His description of the couplet as a basic member of the structure of the poem gives hints for important linguistic models to follow; among them is O'Connor's *Hebrew Verse Structure.*
1.7.3 Pieter van der Lugt ⁵²

One recent significant piece of research into strophic structure of the Psalter is Pieter van der Lugt's *Cantos and Strophes in Biblical Hebrew Poetry with Special Reference to the First Book of the Psalter* (2006). Lugt has written several monographs on the strophic structure of the biblical verse, including his dissertation written in Dutch, *Strofische structuren in de bijbels-hebreeuwse poezi* (1980) and *Rhetorical Criticism and the Poetry of the Book of Job* (1995).

Lugt offers a commendable survey of the history of the study of strophes in biblical poetry from the beginning of the nineteenth century to the first half of the twentieth century (pp. 1-68). After having surveyed more than sixty important studies and numerous proposals from prominent scholars on the subject, Lugt concludes, “to this very day, the question of strophic structure in Hebrew poetry is a much disputed issue.” ⁵³

Lugt explains his methodology in chapter two (pp. 69-92). He scans the strophic divisions based on themes, transition markers, verbal repetitions, and quantitative structure aspects. The last of these is Lugt’s idea of strophic symmetry of chiastic pattern following Kosmala; the chiastic pattern consists of two halves in an equal number of verse lines and cola. Serving as the central theme of the poem, a central axis separates the two halves. The number of words in a line, a bicolon, or tricolon determines the central axis. Interestingly, the belief in the symbolic nature of numbers plays a decisive role in structure division and the meaning of the text.

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⁵³ Lugt, *Cantos*, 69.
The bulk of Lugt's study is in chapter three; it consists of the structural analyses of Psalms 1-41 (pp. 93-418). In chapter four, he tabulates the design of the cantos for the 150 psalms (pp. 419-36); in chapter five Lugt gives some remarks on the verbal repetition, refrain, overall structures, tricola, and transition markers (pp. 437-566).

It is difficult to assess Lugt's ideas of the chiastic patterns and the notion of a central axis that he derives from all forty-one psalms because he gives no textual supports. In the attempt to achieve symmetrical and chiastic patterns in strophic divisions, Lugt scans his structural divisions subjectively. His idea of the central axis that contains the central theme of the psalm is exegetically over-simplified and erroneous; it compromises the messages of the entire poem.

It seems that Lugt was reluctant at first to determine the basic unit of the poem. He begins with the macrostructure of the larger unit of stanzas and cantos and uses them to establish the structures of the psalms, stating, “from this perspective, the problem of the length of the cola is of ‘secondary’ importance.”

However, he later concurs with the view of taking the bicolon as the basic unit, asserting that,

The view in question is, among other things, based on the conviction that in the book of the Psalms, as a rule, the arrangement of the Masoretic text may be trusted. Next, the material and/or formal correspondences between successive cola, the parallelismus membrorum or the internal parallelism, is an important rhetorical characteristic determining the inner coherence of the verselines. Additionally, it is important to note that the Masoretic accents within the verses, which (among other things) mark off the cola, generally deserve more serious consideration than is usually shown to them by critics.

54 Lugt, Cantos, 73.
55 Lugt, Cantos, 522; italics are mine.
Taking the bicolon as the basic unit has caused Lugt's thesis and his structural analyses of forty-one psalms to fall apart. Contrary to the conviction stated above, Lugt's quantitative analyses counted a line as one unit. Moreover, his analyses did not align with the arrangement of the Masoretic text, nor did they consider the Masoretic accents seriously. Lugt's analyses showed the deviations from the Masoretic accents in forty cola delimitations, in twenty-three psalms out of the total forty-one presented. These deviations are due to Lugt's denial of the independent character of the line, to his forcing of the texts into some symmetrical strophic-chiastic patterns, to his word counts that the texts do not afford, and perhaps, to his disregard for the Masoretic accents.

1.8 Syntactic Studies of Biblical Verse

Scholars have offered many different linguistic models ranging from generative to extremely descriptive models. Looking for the alternatives to the metrical models and the Lowthian system, they began to investigate the ancient texts using modern theories across the linguistic spectrum, both in the ancient and modern languages, trying to formulate a new set of general descriptions of biblical Hebrew verse.

What are the descriptions of correspondences of the biblical verse? What is the building block unit of the structure of a poem? Enriched by the knowledge of modern linguistics, scholars began to approach biblical Hebrew verse on the basis of grammatical aspects, going from the known realm of linguistic phenomena to the unknown realm of

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56 These are: Ps 2:11-12, p. 100; Ps 4:2b, 3b, 5a, p. 112; Ps 5:9b, p. 118; Ps 7:9a, p. 135; Ps 8:9b, p. 137; Ps 9:3, p. 142; Ps 10:10, 15, p. 148; Ps 12:5, p. 169; Ps 14:7, p. 178; Ps 15:5c, p. 183; Ps 17:3b, p. 195; Ps 18:2-3, 13a, 29, p. 205; Ps 19:5c, p. 219; Ps 20:10, p. 226; Ps 22:31-32, p. 240; Ps 23:4, p. 250; Ps 25:1-2, p. 262; Ps 29:7-9, p. 294; Ps 30:12, p. 301; Ps 32:2a-b, p. 321; Ps 34:8, p. 337; Ps 35:4, 15, p. 349; Ps 40:5a-b, 6, 12, p. 399.
the ancient biblical verse. The works produced in the decades from 1970s to the present in many ways exemplify such attempts.57

1.8.1 Terrence Collins

Terrence Collins, *Line-Forms in Hebrew Poetry*, is among the first to advance further the important role of syntax in the analyses of biblical Hebrew verse. Like O'Connor, Collins proposes that syntax is the predominant force in the construction of the line in biblical Hebrew verse. Collins attempted to provide a syntactically based method that systematically describes and classifies biblical Hebrew verse in prophetic materials.

Noting the grammatical arguments/constituents of the line, Collins categorizes over 1,900 cola of prophetic texts, which he places under of basic, general, and specific line-types. Basic sentence lines consist of four different types: 1) one basic sentence-line, 2) two basic sentence-lines with same grammatical arguments, 3) two basic sentence-lines with different arguments, 4) two different basic sentence-lines. Collins shows that syntax study can provide good insights for the interpretations of biblical verse; he observes that syntactic usages in Jeremiah are more similar to Third Isaiah than First and Second Isaiah.

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1.8.2 Walter T. W. Cloete

Cloete modified and used O'Connor's method in his attempt to define the colometric system of biblical Hebrew verse using Jeremiah 2-25. After having surveyed non-syntactic approaches to versification such as parallelism and various metrical models, he argues that these models, except syntax, are inadequate for line delimitation. Cloete reaffirms O'Connor's syntactic approach to line delimitation but modifies it to include the counting of objects suffixed to verbs as units and constituents. Cloete also includes the stress counting in his analysis.

Cloete defines the line as the basic metrical unit that is comprised of four levels: units, constituents, clause predicates, and main stress. A line can have a range of between 2-5 units, 1-4 constituents, 0-3 clause predicates, and 1-4 main stresses. The reason Cloete includes the stress counts in his analysis is because the main stress marks the end of the line. Cloete's analysis is an interesting merge of syntax and phonology features to describe the text of Jeremiah 2-25.

1.8.3 Eric D. Reymond

The corpus considered by Reymond comprises the nine poems of the Masada scroll: Sir 40:11-44:15. Reymond considers the bicolon as the basic unit. Reymond's quantitative analysis involves the division of the cola into consonants, syllables, words, and vocable counts. He also employs O'Connor's analyses of clause predicates,

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59 Cloete, Versification, 216.
constituents, and units. With respect to parallelism, Reymond follows Dennis Pardee and classifies four main types of parallelism occurring within and between adjacent and distant cola: repetition, grammatical (morphology and syntax), semantic, and phonetic.

Using syntactic analysis, Reymond was able to conclude that Sirach is a distinctive and independent prototype of biblical verse revealed by the poet's choices of word pairs. Reymond finds five common features in the text studied: (1) a consistent bicolon structure, (2) an approximate equivalence of line-length within bicolon, (3) frequency of grammatical parallelism within the cola, (4) infrequency of common word pairs and of semantic parallelism at verse level, and (5) frequent grammatical, semantic, repletion parallelism between intermediate adjacent verses.61

1.8.4 Michael P. O'Connor

O'Connor's Hebrew Verse Structure has been influenced by the structuralist linguistic theory's of the Prague school headed by Roman Jakobson, who holds that grammar is a determining force in poetry. O'Connor claims four qualities make a poem distinctive: (1) cultural idioms, (2) setting amid language acts: speakers, listeners, and background audiences, (3) use of language: the best words [in the best order], and (4) rhythm or structure: the best order.62 O'Connor believes that because the rhythm or structure quality has not been properly understood, understanding of other qualities of the poem is distorted. O'Connor's Hebrew Verse Structure holds a two-part thesis: (1) the

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61 Reymond, Innovations, 1:2, and 137-38.
rhythm or structure quality as presented by the bicola/tricola system, which he called Standard Description, is linguistically inadequate, and (2) the alternative to Standard Description is Syntactic Description as described in *Hebrew Verse Structure*. 63

Syntactic Description offers the descriptions of syntactic regularities, in the constraints on the cola and in the phenomena of tropes occurring in all levels of the text. O'Connor proposes that the colon, i.e., a *line* in O'Connor's term, is the basic unit of the poem, and the larger unit is the *batch*. The batch is constricted in most cases to about eight lines per unit; and the largest unit is the *stave* (about 23 to 31 lines per unit).

Having examined a large corpus of fourteen hundred lines of biblical Hebrew poetry, O'Connor concluded that the majority of the lines, about three-quarters of the lines, are constrained to two or three grammatical elements (i.e., constituents) consisting of a total of two to three words. He also asserted that the boundaries of the definition of the line might be varied according genre. 64 According to O'Connor, these types of constraints form the shape of a line:

1. A line is a sentence containing up to three clause predicators (finite verbs, infinitive absolutes, infinitive constructs, participles, vocatives, focus markers).

2. A line is a sentence with two or three grammatical elements/constituents (verbs, nouns, prepositional phrases).

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64 O'Connor, *Contour*, 643.
3. If a line contains more than one clause predicator, it does not contain a nominal constituent that is not dependent on one of the clause predicators.  

4. A line is generally (about seventy percent of the cola) a sentence with two or three units.

5. A line does not contain a dependent or noun phrase when it has three clause predicators.

6. If a line contains two clause predicators, one of them must be a dependent or nominal noun phrase.

7. A constituent contains up to four units.

O'Connor explains syntactic correspondences, which he also refers to as “parallelistic phenomena,” in terms of “tropes.” The tropes are the correspondences occurring within and between lines at the word level. There are eight main types of tropes: repetition, binomination, coordination, combination, matching, gapping, syntactic dependency, and mixing. The tropes of binomination, coordination, and combination operate between words in a line. The tropes of matching and gapping operate between adjacent cola. The tropes of syntactic dependency and mixing operate between cola across the entire text. O'Connor discussed at length and gave abundant of examples for each type of trope in his book, there is no need to repeat them here; given below are some of the examples of various types of tropes:

In this study, I will count a vocative as a unit of a line.
1. Trope of Repetition operates at the word level within and between the cola of the entire poem. There are several types of repetitions; Psalm 106: 26b-27a is an example of simple repetition.⁶⁶

To cast them out in the wilderness,
And to cast their seed among the nations

2. Trope of Binomination is the correspondence between names and their glosses of identifying description. Below is an example of divine binomination; it is one of the five types of such correspondences:⁶⁷

Oh Yhwh, the god of my salvation (Ps 88:2a)

3. Trope of Coordination occurs when two names designate not one individual but the two parts of a basic pair. Below is an example of one of the four types of such construction:⁶⁸

They vexed Moses in the camp
They vexed Aaron the holy one of Yhwh (Ps 106:16).

4. Trope of Combination involves a pair of construct phrases.⁶⁹

To see the goodness of your chosen ones,
To rejoice in the gladness of your nation (Ps 106:5).

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⁶⁶ O’Connor, HVS, 110.
⁶⁷ O’Connor, HVS, 373.
⁶⁸ O’Connor, HVS, 114.
⁶⁹ O’Connor, HVS, 114.
The book is a valuable exegetical tool for biblical students of structural study, and it might be the most important book on biblical Hebrew poetry since Robert Lowth, as some have claimed. It describes in linguistic terms how the members within and between the lines communicate with one another, and thus emphasizes the relative independence and important role of the line as the syntactic entity – the basic building block of the structure of the poem. However, why has it only elicited limited responses and from a small circle? Below are some of the probable causes:

a. It is a highly technical work with many neologisms. The presentations of the texts in the book are difficult to follow because of the extensive use of technical terms and abbreviations that require many cross-references.

b. The confusion of terms redoubled as scholars adopted new terms to explain their theoretical differences along with the attempt to re-define certain core linguistic phenomena. This is particularly true for O'Connor's Hebrew Verse Structure, for it has generated criticism among biblical scholars in this regard. Berlin comments,

However, despite the clear plan of organization, the book is difficult in both content and form. O'Connor's own syntax is as complex as the syntactic problems with which he deals. And, although his discussion of linguistic matters is not overly technical, he does use terminology which is unfamiliar to biblicists.

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70 Cloete listed several scholars’ criticisms against O'Connor and concluded that the majority of them are groundless, *Versification*, 80-98.
71 Berlin's review of O'Connor's *Hebrew Verse Structure*. 
c. The book argues against a long established set of ideas, i.e., Standard Description, by pointing out its flaws without giving due credit to aspects that are valid. O'Connor's rejection of the bicolon system has raised objections because the interdependence and correspondence of the parallelismus membrorum of the bicolon system is near absolute in every aspect in the books of Job and Proverbs, and it has an acceptable degree of regularity elsewhere in poetic texts. However, in fairness, O'Connor reckons the connections between the adjacent lines not in terms of semantic parallelism, nor its connectedness, nor its order, nor contiguity of ideas, but in grammatical correspondences such as tropes of matching, tropes of syntactic dependency, tropes of repetition, tropes of mixing, and tropes of gapping.

d. It provides grammatical descriptions and points out the constraints of biblical Hebrew verse, but it does not explain them in terms of linguistic functions nor compare them with prose. This lacking was because O'Connor rejected the belief that "poetic language is a phenomenon entirely apart from ordinary language."72 It is difficult to deny that poetic grammatical phenomena do occur both in elevated prose and in poetry. However, the real issue is the degree of frequency and the roles that such phenomena play in poetry or prose.

e. It did not explain the decisions of lines delimitations in cases where his lineation deviated from that of the MT.73

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72 O'Connor, HVS, 102.
73 O'Connor, HVS, 167-68.
On the other hand, the benefits of using the Syntactic Description in the reading of the whole poem are many.\footnote{O'Connor, \textit{Contour}, 644.} If one recalls Kosmala's description, “a couplet generally contains six to eight units.” O'Connor did not seem to offer anything new except dividing Kosmala's description of a couplet into two lines with an equal number of units for each line. However, it is more than just defining a set of numbers, for the crux of O'Connor's definition of the line is that it is the syntactic entity, the basic building block unit of the poem.

This approach does several things:

i. It frees one's analyses from the defects of the bicolon system that deters the study of the whole poem because the bicolon system erroneously describes poems as structureless assemblages of uniform bicola since this system does not account for the linguistic correspondences between remote lines.

ii. It frees one's analyses from the defects of metrical systems brought about by the unconditional subscription to the bicolon system. Thus, it avoids unnecessary emendations of the MT. Kraus' metrical analysis of Psalm 54 is an example.\footnote{Hans Joachim Kraus, \textit{Psalms} (2 vols.; trans. Hilton C Oswald; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993) 2. 514.}

iii. It avoids erroneous structural divisions into stanzas, strophes, or chiastic pattern based on the bicolon system. Kosmala's analysis of Balaam's oracles in Number 24, and the work of Lugt are examples given above.\footnote{O'Connor, \textit{Contour}, 638-39.}

To further support this point, a more recent example on the structure division based on chiastic pattern is the analysis of Psalm 101 by Michael L.
Barré (2005). Following John S. Kselman, Barré scans the structure of Psalm 101 into three main units: (1) vv. 1-2, (2a) vv. 3-5 and (2b) vv. 6-7, and (3) v. 8. Barré claims that a four-part chiastic pattern constructed by the repetitions of four key words/phrases is the indication that vv. 3-7 is one of the major units of the poem (2a + 2b):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>v. 3a</th>
<th>לנגד עיני</th>
<th>a</th>
<th>v. 6a</th>
<th>עניין</th>
<th>d'</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>v. 3a</td>
<td>דבר</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>v. 7a</td>
<td>עיש</td>
<td>c'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v. 3b</td>
<td>עיש</td>
<td>c</td>
<td>v. 7b</td>
<td>דברים</td>
<td>b'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v. 5b</td>
<td>עינש</td>
<td>d</td>
<td>v. 7b</td>
<td>לנגד עיני</td>
<td>a'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On a quick scan, one notes that (1) the cola in Psalm 101 do not behave consistently as the parallelismus membrorum, i.e., they do not follow the general rule of the dichotomy or binarism. (2) The repetitions of words are not concentrated in vv. 3-7; they span over the entire poem and more than just four listed by Barré:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ידה</th>
<th>v. 1b</th>
<th>v. 8bα</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>בקבר</td>
<td>v. 2bβ</td>
<td>v. 7a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>יתי</td>
<td>v. 2bα</td>
<td>v. 7a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>בורר</td>
<td>v. 2a</td>
<td>v. 6αγ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>למב</td>
<td>v. 2bα</td>
<td>vv. 4αα , 5αγ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>אמן</td>
<td>v. 6αα</td>
<td>v. 8αβ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>אממ</td>
<td>v. 5αβ</td>
<td>v. 8αα</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Delitzsch observed long ago,

But the Masoretic division of the verses is not only obliged sometimes to give up the law of dichotomy, because the verse (as e.g., [Pss]18:2; 25:1;

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does not admit of being properly divided into two parts; and its subjects not only verses of three members (as e.g., [Pss]1:1; 2:2) in which the third member is embellishingly or synthetically related to the other two – both are phenomena which in themselves furnish proof in favour of the relative independence of the lines [cola] of the verse – but also verses of four members where the sense requires it (as [Pss]1:3; 18:16) and where it does not require it (as [Pss]22:15; 40:6), to the law of dichotomy. 78

iv. It is attentive to the Masoretic text and encourages a localized reading of the text based on the smallest building blocks of the line: words. Therefore, it gives due attention to the linguistic correspondences, especially syntactic constructions, between units/words in a given line, between the adjacent lines, and between the remote lines in the poem; it thus enables the assessments of the larger units of the poem, therefore the whole poem.

v. It explains syntactic correspondences that occur between adjacent and remote lines. Thereby it rejects the Lowthian's principle of dichotomy of the bicolon semantic based solely on synonymous, antithetic, and synthetic parallelism. At the same time, it explains semantic parallelism in specific lexical terms.

vi. It gives due attention to the repetition of words between the adjacent and remote lines in structural division. 79

78 Franz A. Delitzsch, Commentary on the Book of Psalms (COT 5, trans. F. Bolton 1886-91; repr., Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996) 16; punctuations are as quoted and brackets are mine. Similarly, Lugt pointed out that according to J. G. Sommer (“Die alphabetischen Lieder von Seiten ihrer Structur und Integrität,” [Biblische Abhandlungen 1; Bonn: H. B. König, 1846]), the symmetrical structure of the strophes can be revealed if one concentrates on the line (cf. Lugt, Cantos, 13). However, Lugt did not follow Sommer's advice.

vii. It pays attention to the rhythmic quality controlled by syntactic constructions of the lines, offering an alternative to meter.

viii. It properly explains binarism, dichotomy, contiguity, connectedness, and correspondences of the adjacent cola/couplet not exclusively in terms of semantic parallelism, but in various categories of lexical and grammatical descriptions.

1.9 Conclusion


O'Connor's idea about the rhythmic structure of biblical Hebrew verse is not new; it draws insights from three principles: metrical, strophic, and structuralist linguistic theories. In defining the constraint of the line, O'Connor combines the idea of Azariah dé Rossie on the word as basic unit of the meter system (as further defined by Kosmala), and the idea of Sommer on the independent role of the line in strophic structure (as reckoned by Delitzsch). He then categorically and descriptively expounds and explains these ideas in the framework of the Russian Formalism and linguistic theory of the Prague school.
The product is the definition of the line as a syntactic building block of the structure of the poem.

More importantly, Syntactic Description involves not mere grammatical description or word-counting of the lines. As pointed out in the preceding section, Syntactic Description can be a useful exegetical tool for biblicists because it provides an alternative approach to parallelism and meter studies. O'Connor explains lexical and grammatical parallelistic phenomena, which other scholars have reckoned and defined as parallelism, as the consequence of syntactic constraints, which he called “tropes.” Berlin observes,

To my mind, one of the most important by-products of this book is to show that phenomena once thought to be peculiar to Hebrew poetry are really common in many poetries, and phenomena once thought to be peculiar to poetry are really aspects of language as a whole. These facts are known to linguists, but they needed to be demonstrated to biblicists.\(^{82}\)

Likewise, metrical patterns are also the consequence of syntactic constraints. O'Connor quantifies metrical patterns of the lines in terms of syntactic constraint. Holladay declares,

I myself am convinced that O'Connor has really solved the nagging question of the analysis of the structure of Hebrew poetry; he understands the pattern to be not metric or rhythmic but syntactic, and he has set forth what he calls “constraints” on allowable syntactic patterns within a given colon.”\(^{83}\)

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\(^{82}\) Berlin's review of O'Connor's *Hebrew Verse Structure*.

Chapter Two
Syntactic Description of the Texts of the Twenty Individual Laments

2.0  Introduction

The present chapter will aim to analyze the syntactic structure of the twenty Individual Laments containing the vocative-imperative combination in the opening lines. In this chapter, I will approach the texts of the twenty psalms using Michael O'Connor's Syntactic Description. I will present the lineation, for the most part, in accord with the MT with all major disjunctive accents observed (e.g., *silluq, soph pasuq, 'athnach*). In addition, I will follow the line divisions as delineated by the editors of the BHS where possible. However, in difficult texts where textual decisions made by the editors of the BHS or the MT appear as erroneous, I will use the constraints of Syntactic Description as guideline. This approach aims also to test the accuracy of the Syntactic Description model in this set of different texts.

As mentioned in Chapter One, O'Connor defined a line as having zero to three clause predicitors, one to four constituents, and two to five units.\(^{84}\) A line having three clause predicitors cannot have a dependent noun phrase. If a line contains two clause predicitors, only one clause predicator can have a dependent noun phrase. A constituent cannot exceed more than four units.

\(^{84}\) Concerning which words will be counted, see William L. Holladay, “*Hebrew Verse Structure Revisited* (I): Which Words Counted?,” *JBL* 118/1 (1999) 19-20.
It is necessary to make clear that adopting O'Connor's syntactic constraint theoretical model does not mean that I reject or deny the presence of other poetic phenomena in my corpus of texts. In spite of the theological complexity and textual difficulties the biblical psalms contain, I understand a biblical poem generally as a creative work having two artistic dimensions, written and spoken. The linguistic phenomena contained in a poem can be fully appreciated by assessing the two dimensions together. However, while Syntactic Description has completely ignored the phonological aspect of biblical Hebrew verse, O'Connor's method should be more than adequate for the purpose of this dissertation in analyzing the structures of the psalms. In addition, for the sake of clarity, the present chapter will focus on the texts and not the canonical contexts of these psalms, therefore, I will not comment on implications related to the titles and superscriptions of the psalms.

The chapter will contain two parts. In the first part, I will provide a general description of the texts of the Individual Laments. I will revisit briefly the basic groundwork laid by form-critical pioneers and later scholars. I also will discuss various implications of the structural outlines and modes of speech prescribed by these scholars. The core of the first part of the chapter will be the structural and exegetical analyses of Psalms 26, 54, and 57 with my own translation. The purpose of these exegetical exercises will be to show the working of Syntactic Description; therefore, I will limit my exegetical comments to important points that concern my decisions on lineation and structure outlines. Since the focus will be on the purpose explained above, I will not discuss every textual difficulty and complex theological idea these three psalms contain.
In the second part of the chapter, I will present the Syntactic Description of the texts of the remaining seventeen Individual Laments and the syntactic structures of the lines of these psalms. A concluding section will summarize the findings.

With respect to the format arrangement of the Syntactic Description analyses of the seventeen Individual Laments, I will present the BHS text and the NRSV translation for each psalm in two columns. Following the text and translation will be the Syntactic Description analysis of the psalm. In this analysis, the syntactic structures of the lines of individual psalm will be assessed and presented. This exercise will serve several purposes:

1. The first purpose will be to verify HVS’s claims concerning the syntactic constraints in biblical Hebrew verse
2. The second will be to examine the overall syntactic constraints of the poetic lines in my corpus of texts
3. The third will be to appraise the overall distributions of the syntactic constraints of the lines across the twenty psalms
4. The fourth will be to assess the syntactic structures of the lines of the twenty psalms for further analyses in Chapter 3.

I will arrange the Syntactic Description analysis in five columns:

a. The first column presents the BHS text for ease of cross-reference.

b. The second column presents a set of three-digit numbers: the first number gives the number of clause predicators, the second number gives the number of constituents representing the full contents of grammatical slots
of the line, i.e., the surface syntactic structure of the line, and the third
number gives number of units/words. For example, a line that contains
one clause predicator, two constituents, and two units will be presented as
122.

The third column presents the syntactic structure of the line; subordinate
clauses are in brackets. I will use the following abbreviations: A, adverb;
S, subject; O, object; V, verb; P, prepositional phrase; Pred, predicate; Phr,
phrase; Voc, vocative.

d. The fourth column identifies the trope(s) of the line. I will use the
following abbreviations: SD, syntactic dependency; M, matching; G,
gapping/ellipsis; SI, syntactic inversion (a syntactic phenomenon not
discussed in O'Connor's HVS); and R, repetition. The number following
the abbreviations, e.g., SD2, M2, tallies the specific tropes contained in
the psalm; this number will restart for each psalm.

e. When there is a fifth column, it identifies the addressee(s) to whom the
speech is directly addressed.

Concerning textual difficulties, the NRSV undoubtedly has, in good measures,
dealt with these difficulties as reflected in its translation; therefore, I will limit my text-
critical comments to places where such difficulties might affect my lineation. For the
most part, as the analyses will show, my lineation agrees with the MT, and/or BHS;
however, in instances where the NRSV differs from the MT, BHS, or my lineation and
structures divisions, I will arrange the NRSV as published and provide notes to explain my lineation.

Concerning my presentation of the analyses, with respect to the vocatives, my tabulation will be different from the HVS. I will count each single individual vocative as a part of the sentence representing one independent clause, one constituent, and one unit. A vocative count will be presented as “+1” (number of units in a vocative phrase will be accounted accordingly). Ps 54:3-4 is an example:

Without the vocatives, lines 54:3a and 54:4a above each contains one clause predicator, two constituents, and two units (i.e., coded as 122). Counting the vocatives as independent clauses, lines 54:3a and 54:4a each then contains two clause predicators, three constituents, and three units. The above arrangement reveals the parallelistic phenomena, i.e., tropes, of the lines.

In some cases, the use of a vocative introduces a sudden break in the flow of the main clause. Without such a break, the syntactic structures of the lines are identical, i.e., match. Ps 17:1a below is one such example:

Using the same presentation, the phenomenon of syntactic inversion is clearly visible in the below Ps 5:2 example:
2.1 General Description of the Twenty Individual Laments

The Individual Laments in general, according to Gunkel, originated in a worship setting and then later evolved as spiritual songs of the individual. According to Gunkel, 39 psalms belong to the general Individual Lament genre: Psalms 3; 5; 6; 7; 13; 17; 22; 25; 26; 27:7-14; 28; 31; 35; 38; 39; 42-43; 51; 54-57; 59; 61; 63; 64; 69; 70; 71; 86; 88; 102; 109; 120; 130; 140; 141; 142; and 143. Out of these psalms, Gunkel further classified Psalms 5, 7, 17, 26 as the Psalms of Protesting Innocence sub-group. He also further grouped Psalms 51 and 130 as the Psalms of Confession. Disagreeing with Gunkel's terminology, other scholars refer to these psalms as a) Prayer Songs, b) Prayer Psalms of the Individual, c) Psalms of Disorientation, d) Prayers for Help, e) Individual Complaint, f) Personal Psalms of Lamentation, and g) Psalms of Petition.

Twenty of the above Individual Laments begin with a vocative and imperative combination in the opening sentence. These twenty psalms have been identified in

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86 In the order listed above:
   b) Craig C. Broyles, Psalms (NIBC 11; Peabody: Hendrickson, 1999) 16.
chapter one, but I list them here again for the convenience of the reader: Psalms 5, 17, 26, 35, 43, 51, 54, 55, 56, 57, 59, 61, 64, 69, 70, 86, 102, 140, 141, and 143. In the following chapter of the dissertation, I will compare my analyses of these twenty psalms to the other Individual Laments in the Psalter.

2.2 Form-Critical Implications in Structure Divisions

2.2.1 The Work of Westermann

Gunkel claimed that the Individual Laments have these components: 1) summons, 2) lament, 3) motivations, 4) petition, and 5) assurance of prayer being heard.\(^\text{87}\) This classic structural scheme of the biblical psalms of laments pioneered by Gunkel in 1930s still serves as the basic framework for many form-critical psalm researchers.\(^\text{88}\)

After Gunkel, besides the work of Mowinckel, Westermann's study is one major contribution to form-critical approach to the Psalter.\(^\text{89}\) Westermann asserts that the oscillating movement between two major modes of speeches of praise and lament characterizes the Individual Laments.\(^\text{90}\) While following Gunkel's basic structural schema as the groundwork, Westermann claims that the Individual Laments typically have these component parts: 1) address and introductory cry or turning to God for help,
2) lament, 3) confession of trust, 4) petition, 5) assurance that prayer is heard, 6) wishes, 7) vow of praise, and 8) praise of God.\textsuperscript{91} According to Westermann, the biblical lament tradition is visible in the poetic material in the book of Psalms, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Job, as well as in the prose materials of the Deuteronomistic corpus and Former Prophets. For Westermann, lament is the language of suffering; the lament in the Psalter has a historical antecedent and a sequel.\textsuperscript{92} The lament looks forward for the removal of sufferings, and its aim of making an appeal to God is evident in the internal structural transition from lamentation to petition.\textsuperscript{93} Thus, the lament functions as the ground of appeal and the argument of the petition. In lament, the petitioners seek to inform the Deity about their sufferings, giving the reasons why God should remove the sufferings:

\begin{quote}
Lamentation has no meaning in and of itself. That it functions as an appeal is evident in its structure. What the lament is concerned with is not the description of one's own sufferings or with one’s self-pity, but with the removal of the suffering itself. The lament appeals to the one who can remove the suffering. The transition is evident in the fact that the lamentation flows into petition (to secure God's attention and intervention) – or, that petition follows lamentation.\textsuperscript{94}
\end{quote}

Westermann claims that the lament proper in the Individual Laments contains these three parts: 1) God, 2) the one who laments, and 3) the enemies.\textsuperscript{95} However, first, not all of the psalms he listed under the Individual Lament genre contain the lament

\textsuperscript{91} Westermann, \textit{Praise}, 64.
\textsuperscript{92} Westermann, \textit{Praise}, 272.
\textsuperscript{94} Westermann 261-66; also in his other work, \textit{The Psalms: Structure, Content and Message} (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1980) 55-57. The notion of a “sequel of historical lament” might have prompted Balentine to argue that such assertion ignores the authenticity of the sufferings of the petitioners, and that the freedom of expression and creativity does not bind itself to the literary-historical traditions. Cf. Samuel E. Balentine, \textit{Prayer in the Hebrew Bible: The Drama of Divine-Human Dialogue} (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 1993) 149-50.
\textsuperscript{95} Westermann, \textit{Praise}, 169.
motifs or make mention of the enemies, e.g., Psalms 26, 51, 54, 61. More importantly, citing Psalm 6 as one example, Miller skeptically points out that “the relationship of the three dimensions to one another is often not very clear and the interpretation founders on the effort to understand that relationship.”

In addition to the arguments made against Westermann's three-party participants, there is the issue of addresser and addressee(s): a significant number of psalms of Individual Laments contain indirect/direct address to the background audiences. Concerning the forms of address, there are many instances in the corpus of texts under study in which the petitioner speaks about the Deity using third-person singular forms. The shift from speaking to the Deity (in second-person singular forms), to speaking about the Deity (in third-person singular forms), is a difficult issue and relates to the issue of genre. Because of the shift, the direct addressee becomes the indirect addressee, and thus the direction of the speech suggests a social setting, e.g., a public prayer in the worship setting because the third party hearers are present. Further complicating the issue is the question of what constitutes a prayer. Are the Individual Laments prayers? What is the definition of a prayer? I will discuss these issues in the next chapter of the dissertation.

The challenges that form-criticism faces have to do with the difficulties in assessing the settings of the psalms. Even more difficult to assess are the identities of the individuals, i.e., the psalmists/petitioners. Yet one predicament of form criticism is,

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ironically, the identifying of similar patterns of linguistic forms and contents so that the
delineation of the structure of a psalm or group(s) of psalms into a specific genre might
be possible. This is not to say that a psalm that said to belong to a specific genre must
bear a specific fixed structural pattern since it is unlikely that any poetic system will
conform to such rigid rules.

2.2.2 Gerstenberger, the problem of thematically based structure divisions

The gross structure of any given psalm may be delineated syntactically in
conjunction with the literary forms and focuses of its content into sub-units that properly
describe the overall rhythmic structure of the psalm, e.g., in terms of its meter, or the
number of stanzas/strophes, or modes of speeches. I have discussed the uncertainties of
the former two categories in chapter one and there is no need to repeat them here, but the
lack of, or the uncertainty of these descriptions of the formal rhythmic structure often
caused erroneous decisions leading to unnecessary textual emendations and structural
divisions. Many structural divisions of the psalms that are based merely on the thematic
shifts alone are often found to be erroneous in instances where clear thematic markers are
lacking.

Gerstenberger stresses that literary phenomena that occur in biblical Hebrew verse
must be taken into account in form-critical analysis in light of life situation and social
setting. The identifications of these situations and settings however remain elusive; yet
for Gerstenberger, the life situation and social setting is the cultic context of the liturgical
setting for every psalm he interpreted. Gerstenberger starts out not with the text but the
presupposition of the ceremony ritual setting of the psalms: “As a last resort they came to
Yahweh. “Asking” (š'l) or “seeking” (drš) the Lord for guidance certainly preceded the actual complaint ritual (see 1 Kgs 14:1-3; Judg 20:23). Afterwards, Yahweh had to be entreated in a manner suggested by a prophet or a singer.”98 Concerning the literary assessments, he adds:

Normally the two parts of one line (each individually called a “hemistich,” or “colon”) correspond to each other in a synonymous, antithetical, or synthetic way. The same feature is well known from other Near Eastern poetic literature. The literary law here was followed in the whole region and probably developed from oral composition techniques using fixed word pairs. The form-critical must recognize such general linguistic and literary influences, which may interfere with the formative impulse of liturgical setting on the Psalms. This last statement is even more true for all those poetic devices that affect the overall structure of a psalm.99

According to Gerstenberger, the Individual Laments may contain these elements:

1. Invocation (appellation and initial plea or petition)
2. Complaint (descriptive, reproachful, petitionary)
3. Confession of sin, assertion of innocence
4. Affirmation of confidence
5. Plea or petition for help
6. Imprecation against enemies
7. Acknowledgement of divine response
8. Hymnic elements
9. Anticipated thanksgiving

98 Gerstenberger, Psalms, 11-12.
99 Gerstenberger, Psalms, 35.
As useful as the listing of these motifs is, one recognizes that not every psalm of the classic Individual Lament genre contains all of the above motifs, and that a single line or a small group of lines can contain multiple motifs, so the main focus of these lines is not always clearly discernable. An example is Ps 26:1:

שָׁפְטִֵ֤ני יְהוָֹּ֗ה
cִֽיֵּאְֲּ֭נִי בְתִּ֣םִי הָלִַ֑כְתִי
וּבַיהוַָ֥ה בָ֝טַֹּ֗חְתִי לִ֣א אֶמְעָּodynamics.  An example is Ps 26:1:

Vindicate me, O Yhwh,
For I have walked in my integrity;
And in Yhwh I trusted so that I will not be moved.

These three lines contain three major motifs: 1) invocation and general petition, 2) assertion of innocence, and 3) confession of trust/affirmation of confidence. Clearly, it is erroneous to split this verse into three separate units as reliance on themes alone might suggest.

Consider the opening lines of the two psalms that many have claimed belong to the classic Individual Lament genre. The opening lines of Ps 22:2-3:

אֵלִִּ֣י אְֵ֭לִי לָמִָּ֣ה עֲזַבְתִָ֑נִי
רָחַ֥וֹק מִ֝ישׁוּעָתִֹּ֗י דִבְרֵַ֥י שַׁאֲגָתִּי׃
אֱ ּלהַֹ֗י אֶקְרִָּ֣א יֵ֖וֹמָם וְלִּ֣א תַעֲנִֶ֑ה
וְ֝לַֹּ֗יְלָה וְּלאֽדּוּמִיַָ֥ה לִּי׃
My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?
Why are you so far from helping me,
Far from the words of my groaning?
O my God, I cry out by day, but you do not answer,
By night, and I am not silent.

Now consider the opening lines in Psalm 54:3-5:

אְֱ֭להִים בְּשִׁמְךִָּ֣ הוֹשִׁיעִֵ֑נִי
וּבִגְבוּרָתְךַָ֥ תְדִינֵּנִי׃
O God, by your name, save me;
And by your power, vindicate me.
O God; hear my prayer,
Give ear to the words of my mouth.
For strangers arose against me;
And violent men sought my life;
They do not set God before them.

There is no lament in Ps 54:3-5. The opening lines of the two psalms do not exhibit the same/similar literary forms, moods, thoughts, and contents, not at the word-level and certainly not at the line-level. Therefore, structure breaks that are based on themes alone are erroneous because of the pre-determined presupposition of a setting in life and the forced thematic reading.

2.3 Syntactical Approach to Structure Divisions: The Various Modes of Speeches

2.3.1 Summons and General Petition

Structural breaks can be determined in light of syntactic patterns, focuses, and modes of speeches. For example, the opening lines of the twenty Individual Laments referred to in this chapter can be grouped as opening sections/paragraphs, hereafter referred to as “summons and general petition.” The opening paragraph has several functions:

1) It addresses the Deity

2) It petitions

3) It explains reasons for petition
The first clause of the opening paragraph is given in the second-person singular imperative that stands before or immediately after the vocative, asking the Deity to vindicate, judge, save, rescue, or listen to the petitioner’s speech. This construction is then usually followed by two subordination causal clauses, i.e., syntactic dependency, explaining the reasons for the petition. The first causal clause of the pair begins with a perfective verb led by a causative דִּבָּר; the second causal clause, which continues the motivation also with a perfective verb, begins with a waw apodosis/interclausal conjunction. These motivation clauses intend to move Yhwh to respond to the petitions. Using Ps 26:1 again as an example that exemplifies such syntactical dependency construction:

שָׁפְטִֵ֤נִי יְהוָֹּ֗ה
cיִֽהוְ֭י אָ֣בְתִּ֣י הָלִַ֑כְ
וּבַיהוַ֥ה בָ֝טַֹּ֗חְתִי לִ֣א אֶמְעָּד׃

Vindicate me, O Yhwh,
For I have walked in my integrity;
And in Yhwh I trusted so that I will not be moved.

In the example of Ps 54:3-5b below, the short form of address-petition-motivation construction includes all three elements of address (vocative), general petition (imperative), and motivation (prepositional phrase) in one opening sentence, Ps 54:3a. The next line, Ps 54:3b, contains a non-perfective and prepositional phrases reiterating the argument of the first line. Another vocative and a series of additional imperatives or perfective or non-perfective verbs in second person singular repeat the

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invocation/petition/motivation construction. Ps 54:3-5 illustrates such syntactical connection between the lines in the opening paragraph:

אֲלֹהִים בְּשִׁמְךִָּ֣ הוֹשִׁיעִֵ֑נִי
וּבִגְבוּרָתְךַָ֥ תְדִינֵּנִי׃
אֲלֹהִים שְׁמִַּ֣ע תְפִלָתִִ֑י
הַ֝אֲזִֹּ֗ינָה לְאִמְרֵיֽפִּי׃
כִִ֤י זָרִַ֨ים׀ קִָ֤ם עָלַֹּ֗י
וְְּּ֭עָרִיצִים בִקְשִּׁ֣וּ נַפְשִִׁ֑י
לִ֤א שַָ֨מוּ אֱלהִֵ֖ים לְנֶגְדִָּ֣ם סֶּלָה׃

O God, by your name, save me;
and by your power, may you vindicate me.
O God; hear my prayer,
give ear to the words of my mouth.
For strangers arose against me;
and violent men sought my life;
they do not set God before them.

In some cases where the situation seems urgent, the imperative takes an accusative begining with the preposition מ adverbial phrase pointing to the main source that causes the petitioner's crisis. Psalm 59:2-4a exemplifies this type of construction; one notes the imperative + imperfective clauses:

תִּצַּלֵֵ֖נִי מֵאֹיְבַַ֥י׀ אֱלהִָ֑י
םִמִּתְקוֹמְמַַ֥י תְשַגְּבֵּנִי׃
הְַ֭צִילֵנִי מִפִֹּ֣עֲלֵי אִָ֑וֶן
וּּמֵאַנְשֵַׁ֥י דָ֝מִֹּ֗ים הוֹשִׁיעֵּנִי׃
כִִ֤י הִמֵֵּ֪ה
אָּרְב֡וּ לְנַפְשִֹּׁ֗י
יָגִ֣וּרוּ עָלִַּ֣י עַזִִ֑ים

Deliver me from my enemies, O my God;
May you set me aloft from those who rise up against me.
Deliver me from iniquity doers
And save me from men of bloodshed
For behold, they lie in ambush for my life;
Strong men attack me,
In other cases, as shown in Ps 64:2-3 below, the imperfects are used instead of the imperatives. The imperfect takes double accusative adverbial phrases beginning with the preposition יִּֽעָנֵ֥י, Ps 64:3a-b; this construction forms the parallelistic phenomenon of verb gapping. The statements point to the source of crisis and express the petitioner's suffering in order to motivate the Deity to respond:

שְׁמַעֽאֱלהִֵּ֣ים קוֹלִֵּ֣י בְשִיחִֵ֑י
מֵפַּ֥חַד א֝וֹיֵֹּ֗ב תִצַֹ֥ר חַיָּי׃
תְַ֭סְתִירֵנִ
י מִןִּ֣וֹד מְרֵעִִ֑ים
מֵ֝רִגְשַֹּׁ֗ת פִֹּ֣עֲלֵי אָּוֶן׃
Hear, O God, my voice in complaint;
From dread of the enemies, preserve my life.
Hide me from the counsel of evildoers,
From the tumult of those who do iniquity.

In some cases, the change in the direction of address marks the structural break. Accompanying such changes in directions are changes in verbal forms to introduce different focuses and modes of speeches. In the example of Ps 57:2-4 below, the shift from second-person singular to third-person singular forms moves the Deity’s position from the direct addressee in v. 2 to become the background audience in vv. 3-4 (who are the direct addressee(s) in vv. 3-4?).

חָמִֵ֤נִי אֱלהִַ֨ים׀ חָמֵֹּ֗נִי
כִַ֥י בְךָָ֮ חָסֵָּ֪
יָה נַַ֫פְשִַׁ֥י
וּבְצֵּלֽכְנָפֶַ֥יךָ אֶחְסִֶ֑ה
עַֹ֝֗ד יַעֲבַֹ֥ר הַוּּוֹת׃
אְֶ֭קְרָא לֵּאלהִִּ֣ים עֶלְיִוֹ֑וִּי
לְאֵל גֹּמֵַ֥ר עָלָּי׃
יִשְׁלִ֤ח מִשָמַַ֨יִם׀ וְּיוֹשִֹּ֗נִי
חֵרִֵּ֣ף שֹׁאֲפִִּ֣י סִֶ֑לָה
יִשְׁלַַ֥ח אֱ֝להִֹּ֗ים חַסְדַ֥וֹ וַאֲמִתּוֹ׃
Be gracious to me, O God, be gracious to me,
Because I will seek refuge in you;
I will seek refuge in the shadow of your wings
Until Destruction passes by.

I cry to God Most High,
To God who provides for me.
May he send from heaven and save me;
May he reproach one who crushes me. Selah.
May God send his kindness and his faithfulness.

Using the preceding observations, e.g., change of direction of address, and syntactic phenomena in determining structural breaks, the following additional modes of speeches might be identified in the twenty psalms under study.

2.3.2 The Affirmation and Confession Mode of Speech

The Affirmation and Confession generally consists of these three elements: a) declaration of trust, b) protestation of innocence, and c), confession of sins.

a) In the Declaration of Trust the *waw* adversative with the subject pronoun, e.g.

“but I . . .,” or “but you . . .,” stands at the beginning of a clause indicating a change in mode of speech, and therefore a structure break:\(^{101}\)

\[אֲדֹנָי אָלְרַחִּוּם וְחַמִ֑וּן אֶַ֥רֶךְ אַ֝פַֹּ֗יִם וְרַבֽחֶַ֥סֶד וֶאֱמֶּת׃\]

But you, O Lord, are the merciful and gracious God,
Slow to anger and abundant in kindness and truth (Ps 86:15).

b) Protestation of Piety and Innocence: This mode of speech usually follows the Summons and Introductory Petition. An example is Ps 17:3-5:

\[בָ֘חִַ֤נְתָ לִבִַ֨י פָ֘קִַ֤דְתָ לַֹּ֗יְלָה צְרַפְתַַ֥נִי בַלֽתִמְצִָ֑א זַ֝םֹתִֹּ֗י בַלֽיַעֲבָרֽפִּי׃\]

You have probed my heart, visited me at night.
You have tested me and found no evil in me;
I have determined that my mouth will not transgress.
As to the works of men, by your words
I have kept myself from the way of violence.
My steps have held to your paths;
My feet did not slip.

c) Confession of Sins: This mode of speech is infrequent in the group of psalms under study. An example is Ps 51:5-6 below:

For I know my transgressions;
And my sin is before me.
Against you only, I have sinned;
And I have done evil in your eye.

2.3.3 The Complaint: This mode of speech has three categories: a) complaint against the enemies, b) complaint about the sufferings of the petitioner, and c) complaints against the Deity.

a) Complaint against the enemies: In this type of complaint, the perfective verbs nuance the aspect of present perfect to describe the events that have happened in the past and continue in the present. An example is Ps 55:3b-4:
I am restless in my complaint and I am distracted
From the voice of the enemies
And from the pressure of the wicked,
For they bring down trouble upon me;
And in anger they bear a grudge against me.

b) Complaint about the suffering of the petitioner: The suffering can be due to illnesses, persecutions by the enemies, or burden of sins. In Ps 55:5-6 below, this mode of speech made no mention of the enemies. Here, the suffering is mental illness, the terrors of death:

My heart is in anguish within me,
And the terrors of death have fallen upon me.
Fear and trembling come upon me,
And horror has overwhelmed me.

In other cases, the suffering is the real physical danger posed by the enemies. An example is Ps 57:5 below:

My soul is among lions;
I lie down among cannibals who devour,
Their teeth are spears and arrows
And their tongues are sharp swords.
Complaint against the Deity: This mode of speech is uncommon in the Individual Laments under study; it occurs only in Psalms 43 and 102. This mode of speech usually contains a vocative clause naming the Deity as the cause of the petitioner’s suffering. In the Individual Laments, there are two common types of vocatives: vocative of expression and vocative of exclamation. Ps 54:3 contains an example of vocative of expression:

אְֱּ֭להִים בְשִׁמְךִָ֣ הוֹשִׁיעִֵ֑נִי
O God, save me by your name. (Ps 54:3)

In the above example, אְֱּ֭להִים is the vocative expression; it identifies the Deity as the one to whom the petitioner is speaking. It is an independent syntactic element from the imperatival clause “save me by your name.”

In other instances, the interrogative clause stands after the vocative and forms an exclamative expression. One example of this type is Ps 22:1:

אֵלִִּ֣י אְֵ֭לִי לָמִָּ֣ה עֲזַבְתִָ֑נִי
My God my God, why have you forsaken me?

The interrogative “why have you forsaken me?” identifies the vocative phrase “My God my God” as the person to whom the question is addressed. Such vocative-interrogative construction is the direct exclamative expression. Some have argued that this type of construction, and other similar interrogative clauses that occurred frequently in the

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102 Interestingly, scholars have raised many issues concerning the genre and structures of these two psalms. Many have viewed Psalm 43 as the conclusion of Psalm 42. The assessment of structure and genre for Psalm 102 is notoriously difficult; this psalm contains many difficulties and implications regarding genre classification.
Individual Laments, is the petitioner's complaint against the Deity. However, it is an intricate matter to define the categories or dimensions of the complaint. Depending on the context, not every example of this type of expression can be interpreted as the complaint against God. Consider this lament proper in Ps 35:15-17:

בִּצְלָעֵי שָׁמְחֵוּ וְנֶאֱסַ֥פ נֶאֶֽסְפּוּ עָלִַּ֣י נְֵ֭כִים וְלִ֣א יָדִַ֑עְתִי קָ֥רְעַ֥וּ וְלאֽדָּםוּ׃
בְּחַנְפֵי לַעֲגִֵּ֣י מָעִ֑וֹג חָרֵֹ֖ק עָלִַּ֣י שִׁמֵּימוֹ׃
אֲדֹנָיָ֮ כַּמֵָּ֪ה תִַ֫רְאֶ֥ה
הָשִִּׁ֣יב נְַ֭פְשִׁי מִשֹאֵיהִֶ֑ם מִכְפִירִֹּ֗ים יְחִידָתִּי׃

But at my stumbling they rejoiced and gathered themselves together; The smitters whom I did not know gathered together against me, They slandered me without ceasing. Like godless jesters at a feast, They gnashed at me with their teeth. Lord, how long will you look on? Rescue my soul from their ravages, My only life from the lions.

Commentators have different interpretations of the phrase “Lord, how long will you look on?” Gunkel sees this type of question as a rhetorical device designed to challenge the Deity's honor, i.e., a motivation device to persuade God to act. Miller considers it as a complaint against God to challenge the way God has acted or threatened to act. Kraus interprets the question as part of the supplication to follow. Hossfeld interprets the petitioner’s question as part of the lament proper. For Hossfeld, the

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104 Gunkel, Introduction, 155-56; so Weiser, Psalms, 303.
105 Miller, They Cried, 70-74; so Broyles, Psalms, 171.
106 Kraus, Psalms I, 394; so Gerstenberger, Psalms I, 152.
question has a more confrontational nature, i.e., it is not a complaint but an accusation (Anklage) made against the Deity; the petitioner accuses the Deity of being a bystander who watches the petitioner about to be killed by the enemies but not doing anything to help.\textsuperscript{107}

On the other hand, Eaton agrees with Westermann, interpreting the question not as a complaint against but an appeal to the Deity for immediate responses.\textsuperscript{108} Such expression describes the petitioner's feeling of isolation and distress; it assumes a close relationship between the petitioner and the Deity.

The complaints against the Deity clearly identify at length the Deity as the cause of the sufferings (cf. Psalms 6, 13, 43, 102). In voicing the complaints against the Deity, the petitioner explicitly accuses the Deity as the main cause of the sufferings. This type of speech continues the complaint at length; it appears predominantly in the psalms of the communal laments, in Jeremiah, and in prose prayers. In the twenty psalms under study, Psalms 43 and 102 are the only two psalms that contain the complaints against God.

Below is Ps 102:10-12 is one example:

\begin{verbatim}
כִֽיָּ֭פֶר כַלִֶּ֣חֶם אָכִָ֑לְתִי
וְ֝שִׁקְוָֻּ֗י בִבְכִַ֥י מָסָּכְתִי׃
מִפְנֵּֽיַּעַמְךַָ֥ו וְקִצְפִֶ֑ךָ
כִַ֥י נְשָאתַֹּ֗נִי וַתַּשְּלִיכֵּנִי׃
יְָ֭מַי כְצִֵּ֣ל נָטִ֑וּי
וַ֝אֲנִ֨י כָעֵַ֥שֶב אִיבָּשׁ׃
\end{verbatim}

For I have eaten ashes for bread;
And I have mixed my drink with weeping
From your indignation and your wrath,


Because you have lifted me up and cast me down.  
My days are like a stretched out shadow,  
And I, like grass, wither away.

Another example of the complaint against God is Ps 80:5-7 below. The complaints made against the Deity are clear and pronounced. The petitioner accuses the Deity as the acting agent for all the hardships and embarrassments; the accusations made against the Deity are explicit. Zenger interprets Ps 80:5-7 as “reproaching Yhwh with the utter contradictoriness and absurdity of his behavior.”

O LORD God of hosts,  
How long will you be angry with the prayer of your people?  
You have fed them with the bread of tears,  
And you have made them to drink tears in large measure.  
You make us an object of contention to our neighbors,  
And our enemies laugh among themselves.

2.3.4 The Petition

The petition is the request made to the Deity to remove or lessen the sufferings. The core verbal forms for this mode of speech are the imperative forms with first-person singular suffixes. The jussives are also used in conjunction with the imperatives expressing the wishes for divine blessings for the petitioners (friends may be included), or curses of the enemies. The petition generally consists of the following types: healing

from illness, protection from the enemies, seeking justice, forgiveness of sins, removal of punishment, protection from sins, punishment of the enemies, and gracious divine intervention.\textsuperscript{110}

The petition for gracious intervention can be given in the form of negative prohibition, and is often interpreted erroneously, in my view, as the complaint against God. Ps 35:20-22 is one example:

\begin{verbatim}
כִּי לַא שָׁלֹּוֹם יְדַַֽבֵַ֥ר
וְעַַ֥ל רִגְעֵיֽאִֶ֑רֶץ דִבְרֵַ֥י מִ֝רְמוֹת יַחֲשֹׁבּוּ׃
וַיַרְחִַ֥יב֩וּ עָלַֹּ֗י פִַ֫יהֶַ֥ם אְָ֑֭מְרוּ הֶאִָ֣ח׀ הֶאִָ֑ח רָאֲתַָ֥ה עֵינֵּינוּ׃
רָאִִּ֣יתָה יְְ֭הוָה אַלֽתֶחֱרִַ֑שׁ אֲ֝דֹנָֹ֗י אֲלֽתִרְחַַ֥ק מִםֶּמִי׃
\end{verbatim}

For they do not speak peace,  
But they devise deceitful words against those who are quiet in the land.  
They opened their mouth wide against me;  
They said, “Aha, aha, our eyes have seen it!”  
You have seen it, O LORD, do not keep silent;  
O Lord, do not be far from me.

The negative prohibitions, Ps 35:22a-b, are theologically loaded. I interpret such negative prohibitions as the rhetorical statements intended to move the Deity to response. These statements nuance the essences of the Deity: God knows all things for he has “seen it.” God has spoken in the past and is expected to speak again, thus “O Yhwh, do not keep silent.” From divine presence to divine immanence, God is everywhere and is present amidst his people and so the expectation “O Lord, do not be far from me.” One should interpret the ideas of the absence and silence of the Deity in relation with the

\textsuperscript{110} For a comprehensive list of verbs used in the petition proper, see Aejmelaeus, Traditional Prayer, 15-50.
expectation of the certainty that God will speak (cf. Pss 10:1, 17; 27:9; 69:17; 102:2; 143:7), and that God will reveal himself to intervene on behalf of the petitioner (cf. Ps 55:17-19).\textsuperscript{111}

2.3.5 Praise and Affirmation of Prayer Heard:

Praises usually occur after the petition, or at the end of the poem. The petitioner praises the Deity in order to persuade the Deity to take action. Generally, praises might be grouped in two typical categories: conditional and unconditional. In conditional praises, the petitioner makes a vow to praise if the Deity answers in favor of the petitions. In some cases, this type of vow of praise involves promise of sacrifices (e.g., Ps 51:21).

Unconditional praises are the expressions of gratitude. In other instances, the petitioner praises the Deity giving the indication that the Deity has heard the prayer. This type of praise is usually declarative in general, and often appears at the conclusion of the poem (e.g., Ps 57:8-12).

Noting the above observations concerning various modes of speeches, the next section will deal with the Syntactic Descriptions and exegeses of Psalms 26, 54, and 57.

2.4 Syntactic Descriptions and Exegeses of Psalms 26, 54, and 57

2.4.1 Psalms 26

Vindicate me, O Yhwh
For in my integrity I have walked;
And in Yhwh I trusted so that I will not waver.
Examine me, O Yhwh, and test me.
Test my mind and my heart.
For your goodness is before my eyes,
And I have walked in your truth.
I do not sit with worthless men,
And with hypocrites I do not go.
I hate the assembly of evildoers,
And I do not sit with the wicked.
I will wash my hands in innocence,
So that I may go about your altar, O Yhwh,
To proclaim with the voice of thanksgiving,
And to recount all your wonders.
O Yhwh, I love the abode of your dwelling
And the place of the dwelling of your glory.
Do not remove my soul along with sinners
Nor my life with men of bloodshed,
In whose hands is a wicked plan,
And in whose right hand is full of bribes.
But I walk in my integrity.
Redeem me, and be gracious to me.
My foot stands on a level place;
In the congregations, I shall bless Yhwh.

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112 The editors of the BHS suggests a missing stich corrupts the metrical structure of this half verse, v. 1b. I find no textual support to amend the text.
113 Translation follows Qere, reading צָרְפָה (Qal Imperative).
114 Literally “kidneys.”
115 The editors of BHS suggests the omission of יהוה to fit 3+3 meter pattern. There is no textual support for such omission, I prefer the reading as printed due to the uncertainties of meter.
116 The Septuagint (A and L) adds κύριε perhaps for the sake of a 3+3 meter pattern. I retain the reading of BHS for the same reason above.
Psalms 26

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>מילים</th>
<th>כותרת</th>
<th>סדניק</th>
<th>הופעה</th>
<th>השם</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>peasem</td>
<td>111+1</td>
<td>V+Voc</td>
<td>SD1</td>
<td>Yhwh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>פיראי</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>[SPV]</td>
<td>SD1; R1</td>
<td>Yhwh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>בְּשָׁפְטִי</td>
<td>233</td>
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Lineation:

Psalm 26 contains some lineation difficulties that can affect the decisions in the surface structure divisions. The lineation of v. 1 is problematic; consider the Masoretic and BHS lineation of v. 1:

MT

שָׁפְטִֵ֤נִי יְהוָֹּ֗ה כִּיֽאְֲּ֭נִי בְתֺםִִּ֣י הָלִַ֑כְתִי
וּבַיהוַָ֥ה בָ֝טַֹּ֗חְתִי לִ֣א אֶמְעָּד׃

BHS

שָׁפְטִֵ֤נִי יְהוָֹּ֗ה     כִּיֽאְֲּ֭נִי בְתֺםִִּ֣י הָלִַ֑כְתִי
וּבַיהוַָ֥ה בָ֝טַֹּ֗חְתִי    לִ֣א אֶמְעָּד׃

Assessing the MT a/b division of the above verse, one observes that v. 1a has three clause predicators (שָׁפְטִֵ֤נִי, יְהוָֹּ֗ה, הָלִַ֑כְתִי), three constituents, and five units. This lineation does not fit within the constraints of Syntactic Description; it also does not agree numerically with the remaining lines of the poems because of the length. The second line, v. 1b, has two clause predicators (בָ֝טַֹּ֗חְתִי, אֶמְעָּד), two constituents, and three words. The MT lineation of v. 1b fits within the constraints of Syntactic Description.

With respect to BHS lineation, one does not know what has prompted the editors of BHS to split v. 1 into four lines (though the splitting of v. 1a is in agreement with Syntactic Description). The editors may have split the lines because of the disjunctive rebia' gadol or because the lengths of the lines are too long, i.e., metri causa (BHS divisions in the Psalter seldom allow a line to contain more than three words/units). While BHS's lineation of v. 1a fits within the constraints of Syntactic Description, the splitting of v. 1b (my lineation = 1c) is unsatisfactory. The editors of the BHS propose
that a stich is missing in v. 1b therefore corrupting the meter; I find no textual support for such argument.

In cases where the MT's lineations are dubious such as these, the lacking of the definition of a line is problematic. A quick and easy solution is to emend the text so that it might fit a certain prescribed metrical pattern, however unnecessary such a decision might be. Some have suggested that by eliminating והיה בותחת or השפטני יהוה כי the remaining lines would fit into 2+2+2 meter, but such colometric reconstruction is *metri causa* motivated; it has no textual support.\(^{117}\)

Others, Craigie and Kraus for example, are either indecisive or give no support for their proposed lineation for this verse. Craigie is indecisive; he scans v. 1 as having two lines in accord with the MT while saying “it is possible to that v. 1 should be interpreted as four short lines rather than two long lines. But the parallelism links the middle two clauses, contributing to the uncertainty of the analysis.”\(^{118}\) Kraus, on the other hand, gives no reason why he read the text in three lines.

The MT lineation of v. 1b fits within the constraints of Syntactic Description; the negated form לא א美德 presents a future condition contingent on the situation expressed in והיה בותחת. One also notes that the opening lines, i.e., the Summons and General Petition, generally contains one imperative and one vocative in the opening line. This opening line is usually followed by two lines containing two causal clauses, i.e., syntactic

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\(^{117}\) Gunkel, *Introduction*, 108; cf. Kraus, *Psalms*, 26. The disparity is also shown in some modern translations: four lines = NIV; two lines = NASV; three lines = NRSV.

\(^{118}\) Craigie, *Psalms*, 223. So Hossfeld, *Psalms* 2, 169. Since the issue of parallelism has been addressed in chapter one, there is no need to repeat it here. Kraus, *Psalms*, 325.
dependency of subordination to the core clause (cf. Pss 51:5, 54:5, 55:4b). The first causal clause of the pair begins with a causative כי, and the second causal clause continues the motivation with a waw interclausal conjunction (one notes the same syntactic dependency arrangement in v. 3). The MT lineation for the remaining lines of vv. 2-12 fit within the constraints of Syntactic Description.

Line Types:

All the lines are delineated into the constraints of zero to three clause predicators, one to three constituents, and two to three units per line. The majority of the lines contain one to two clause predicators, two to three constituents, and two to three units.

1. Clause predicators:
   a) zero clause predicator: 2/25 lines
   b) one clause predicator: 16/25 lines
   c) two clause predicators: 6/25 lines
   d) three clause predicators: 1/25 lines

2. Constituents:
   a) one constituent: 1/25 lines
   b) two constituents: 12/25 lines
   c) three constituents: 12/25 lines

3. Units:
   a) two units: 5/25 lines
   b) three units: 19/25 lines
   c) four units: 1/25 lines
4. Vocatives: Yhwh (five occurrences)

**Gross Structure**

The linguistic correspondences unified the gross structure of this psalm. The prefix and suffix verb forms and the imperatives used throughout the entire poem demarcate different modes of speeches in the poem. Concerning the participants, the “I,” “You,” and “They” forms are clearly visible in this psalm. The “I” forms dominate the entire poem; they appear twenty-nine times in various verbal forms, pronominal and nominal suffixes, and direct object suffixes. The “You” forms (the Deity), occur nineteen times in vocatives, imperatives, pronominal suffixes, and negative prohibition. The “They” forms (worthless men, hypocrites, evildoers, and the wicked) are mentioned eight times in construct nouns, plural suffixes, and participles.

I divide this twenty-five-line poem into five poetic paragraphs. Instead of using O'Connor's terminology of Batch 1, Batch 2 and so on, I am using the standard form-critical labels to describe each paragraph because of the familiarity of terminology:119

a) Summons and general petition       vv. 1-3 (7 lines)

b) Protestation of innocence       vv. 4-5 (4 lines)

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c) Cultic ceremony vV 6-8 (6 lines)

d) Petition for God to spare psalmist’s life vV 9-10 (4 lines)

e) Statements of prayer being heard vV 11-12 (4 lines)

The poem exhibits this thematic movement:

The first paragraph of the poem

1. Summons/general petition for vindication (v. 1a)

2. Motivations for vindication are explained (v. 1b)

3. Repeated summons/call for God to judge the psalmist’s standing of innocence (v. 2)

4. Motivations for God to judge the psalmist’s innocence are explained (v. 3)

The second paragraph of the poem

5. Attestations of innocence in psalmist’s way of life (vV 4-5)

The third paragraph of the poem

6. Confirm standing of innocence through ritual ceremony action and thanksgiving words (vV 7-8)

The fourth paragraph

7. Petition for God to spare psalmist's life (vV 9-10)

The fifth paragraph

8. Statements of prayer being heard (vV 11-12)

a) *The Summons and General Petition* (vV 1-3): I further sub-divide this seven-line section into two smaller paragraphs, v. 1, and vV 2-3. Sub-paragraph one begins with an imperative immediately followed by a vocative, v. 1a. In the individual prayers, this
form of “command/plea + address” construction is typical followed with a pair of causal clauses, v. 1b-c (subordinated to v. 1a forming the trope of syntactic dependency). These causal clauses seek to motivate the addressee to act.

Subparagraph two, vv. 2-3, has similar figure of speech arrangement. The petition is expanded with three imperatives followed by a pair of causal clauses. The use of singular imperative with first-person singular object suffixes, first-person singular perfect and imperfect forms, and first-person singular nominal suffixes united vv. 1-3 as one section. The linguistic correspondence between v. 1b and v. 3b is clear, it reinforces the unity of vv. 1-3.

The petitioner opens the plea with שָׁפְטִּֽנִי (judge me) asking Yhwh to test and exam the petitioner’s “kidney/mind and heart.” On the idea of asking the Deity to judge oneself, Kraus observed, “We are here not dealing with the justificatio impii but with the justificatio justi.”\(^{120}\) It is accurate to render שָׁפְטִּֽנִי as “vindicate me” in the sense that the Deity is to decide the controversy between the petitioner and the wicked. He is to condemn the wicked and therefore vindicate the petitioner. Immediately after the plea are the motivation statements to move the Deity to respond because of the petitioner’s integrity and trust in the Deity. The petitioner repeats the plea in vv. 2-3.

\(b\) Protestation of Uprightness of Character (vv. 4-5)

Verses 4-5: The grammatical shift marked by the negation clause לאֽיְָ֭שׁבְתִי (I do not sit) in v. 4a indicates a change in topic from Summons and General Petition to Protestation.

\(^{120}\) Kraus, Psalms 1-59, 173, 329.
In this section, the focus here is not on the enemies but the petitioner's plea of innocence and moral uprightness.

c) *Cultic Ceremony* (vv. 6-8)

The next three verses, vv. 6-8, contain the motif of the liturgical ritual of purification (cf. Deut 21:6). The rite moves from declaration of innocence, i.e., oath of purification (cf. 1 Kgs 8:31), to the ritual of washing of hands, to the affirmation of cleansing indicated by the act of walking around the altar. In the Psalter, **נָקִיוֹן** occurs only here in v. 6a and Ps 73:13, where one finds the exact expression **נָקִיָּה וּנְקִיוֹן** (I will wash my hands in innocence).

The washing of hands in v. 6a has a two-fold purpose: 1) it looks backward to affirm what the psalmist said in vv. 4-5 is true (oath of purification, cf. 1 Kgs 8:31), and 2) it looks forward to anticipate the immediate series of response actions in the next three lines. The first response is a wish initiated by the cohortative **ינִעֲשֶׂהוּ** (so that I may go about); the clause expresses a wish that was pre-conditioned by the act of washing of hands in the preceding line v. 6a (syntactic dependency). The second response is to proclaim the songs of thanksgiving in liturgical worship (cf. 1 Kgs 15:22; Jer 4:15, 5:20; Isa 52:7; Jos 6:10; Ps 66:8). The third response is to recount God's miracles (**ךָכָלֽנִפְלְאוֹתֶּי** “all your miracles”). The cohortative and infinitive construct clauses tightly connected these lines into a unit (syntactic dependency).

The vocative Yhwh syntactically introduces a break in thematic progression of the poem; it introduces the petition proper, vv. 8-10. The two lines in v. 8 continue the Temple motif; they formed a single syntactic entity (syntactic dependency,
ellipsis/gapping); these two lines are the rhetorical motivation statementss for vv. 9-10 to follow.

d). The Petition (vv. 9-10)

Line 9a begins with a series of negative prohibition statements that end in v. 10b. The four lines in vv. 9-10b are united as a single syntactic entity (syntactic dependency of ellipsis/gapping of v. 9a). The phrase in v. 9b, (verb gapping to v. 9a) is the core clause on which the two subordinate verbless relative clauses in v. 10a-b depend. The petitioner pleads with the Deity not to remove his soul along with sinners or his life with men of bloodshed. The basic motivation for this petition is the petitioner's love of the Temple where the glory of Yhwh dwells.

The above observations of the grammatical phenomena (the use of ellipsis/gapping, i.e., two core clauses, to construct two syntactic entities in six poetic lines) attest to the unity of vv. 8-10 as a poetic paragraph. In the preceding paragraph the syntactic dependencies are seen with the cohortative and infinitive construct clauses.121

e). Closing Statement of Confidence (vv. 11-12)

The concluding section contrasts the petitioner's characters with that of the wicked ones in the preceding section. The waw adversative + first-person pronoun יְֽאִנִּי (but I) contrasts the petitioner's character with that of the enemies' in the preceding lines.

121 According to Mosca, there are various internal indications that vv. 9-10 constitute a distinct paragraph. Syntactically the two verses form a unit, and this sense of unity is reinforced by the parallelism that marks the line-ends of the two bicola. Mosca is correct in noting the two verses as a syntactic entity but his assessment of parallelism is vague. Though the two lines form a syntactic entity it does not constitute a poetic paragraph/section. One notes that other paragraphs which he also considers as separate sections do contain more than one syntactic entity. Paul G. Mosca “Psalm 26: Poetic Structure and the Form-Critical Task,” CBQ 47 (1985) 223, 224.
This shift in focus marks a structural break in the poem. The petitioner reiterates his plea for redemption. Line 11a repeats the opening motivation statement in v. 1b. The poem then ends with statements of confidence that include the motif of praise.

Concerning the form-critical assessment, one notes these important points:

1) The motifs of the Temple and the ritual ceremony are intertwined with the motifs in vv. 6-8,12. These motifs might have prompted some commentators to suggest that the psalm is a prayer of a falsely accused individual, a protestation of innocence of a pilgrim who takes an oath and goes through the washing of hand ritual (cf. 1 Kgs 8:31-32; Deut 21:6; Ps 73:13). Many scholars also have concluded that Psalm 26 is the prayer of an unfairly accused person in the setting of the Temple. Vogt, as Broyles and Kraus, argued for a liturgical setting. Citing similarities found in Psalms 15 and 24, these scholars claimed that Psalm 26 is a prayer of a falsely accused person entering the Temple.

The language of the psalm insinuates the setting of the Temple where the supplicant subjects himself to the purification ritual to protest his innocence and asks Yhwh to spare his life. However, this interpretation is not without difficulty because in 1 Kings 8:31-32 the taking an oath is required if a man has sinned against his neighbor. The person was guilty and thus required to take an oath before the altar. In Psalm 26, the petitioner claimed to be innocent. It is difficult to accept Gunkel's Individual Lament

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122 E.g., Weiser, Psalms, 242, Kraus, Psalms, 325-327.
123 Weiser, Psalms, 243, Kraus, Psalms, 324. Hossfeld, Psalms 2, 167.
genre designation for this psalm because it contains no lament, complaint, or illness motif.¹²⁵

Concerning the structure of the present psalm, I did not aim to show that the cohesiveness of the structure of this psalm is poetically unique as a structure beyond that of other psalms. Rather, by using Psalm 26 as an example I sought to demonstrate that the working of syntactic description can help in solving difficult colometric situations without unnecessary emendation of the text on the basis of meter, where textual supports are lacking, e.g., in vv. 1,11b. The various modes of speeches of the Individual Laments presented in the preceding analysis are widely known among form-critical scholars; however, the grouping of lines based on themes/thematic progression alone cannot be substantiated where clear indication of thematic or topical change is lacking.

¹²⁵ Gunkel, Introduction, 35-36
2.4.2 Psalm 54

O God, through your name save me. And through your might vindicate me. O God, hear my prayer. Give ear to the words of my mouth. For foreigners stand against me, And the ruthless ones seek my life. They do not set God before them.

Lo, God is a helper for me, The Lord is the supporter of my life. He returns evil to my foes. In your faithfulness, wipe them out. By freewill, I will sacrifice to you. I will praise Yhwh, because it is good; For he has delivered me from all troubles, So that my eye gazed upon my enemies.

126 Following Mss, Targum, and Ps 86:14, NRSV, Hossfeld, and Kraus, prefer the reading of κραταιοὶ (insolent men). I retained the MT reading in light of LXX (κραταιοί); cf. Isa 25:2-3; Isa 29:5; Ezek 28:7, 31:12. So did Briggs and Briggs, Broyles, Delitzsch, Weiser, NAS, NIV, NKJ, NLT, ESV, and NJPS.
127 Some Mss read יהוה; but LXX reads ὁ θεὸς. I prefer the reading of third-person singular, jussive, taking יְזָרִים as the subject. Many Mss and LXX read as Qere Hiphil imperfect third-person singular יָשִּׁב. Syriac and Jerome read the imperative יָשִּיב. I find no reason to alter the text here, though Kraus suggests transposing יהוה from v. 8b to the end of this line on the basis of meter. Kraus, Psalms, 513-14.
128 A few Mss and the LXX omitted יהוה. I prefer the reading as printed because of the reason stated in previous note.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Phrase</th>
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<th>Subjects</th>
<th>Object</th>
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</table>
Psalm 54 contains no lineation difficulties that affect its surface structure. The poem is heavily troped; all of the lines as presented by the MT are delineated within the constraints of Syntactic Description; my lineation also agrees with NRSV.

Line Types: all the lines are delineated within the constraints of one to three clause predicators, two to four constituents, and two to four units per line. The majority of the lines contain one predicator, two to three constituents, and three units.

1. Clause predicators:
   a) one clause predicator: 12/15 lines
   b) two clause predicators: 2/15 lines
   c) three clause predicators: 1/15 lines

2. Constituents:
   a) two constituents: 7/15 lines
   b) three constituents: 7/15 lines
   c) four constituents: 1/15 lines

3. Units:
   a) two units: 2/15 lines
   b) three units: 12/15 lines
   c) four units: 1/15 lines

3. Vocatives:
   a) God: two occurrences
   b) Yhwh: one occurrence
Gross Structure

Similar to other psalms of individual laments in the present study, the prefix and suffix verbal forms and the imperatives with first-person singular suffixes used throughout the entire poem formed the thematic progression of the tripartite participants, “I,” “You,” and “They” parties in this psalm. The poem is a direct address to God and to the background listeners (third-person singular forms in vv. 4a, 6a-b, 7a, and 9).

I divide this fifteen-line poem into two paragraphs. The first paragraph, vv. 3-5, consists of seven lines. The opening line begins with the vocative and immediately followed by a petition. The latter consists of an imperative and a motivation phrase. The second line, v. 3.b, is syntactically parallel to the first (prepositional phrase + verb; each line has one clause predicator, two constituents, and two words with the vocative as an independent clause).

Verse 4 repeats the Summons and Petition mode of speech; it forms another syntactic parallelistic entity. The vocative is an independent clause; the two lines in v. 4 are an exact match (verb + prepositional phrase; each line consists of one clause predicator, two constituents, and two words). The three causal clauses in v. 5 are syntactically dependent on v. 4. Together, the lines in these two verses are syntactically united as a unit.

There are syntactic parallelistic entities in lines 4a-b (subject + verb + prepositional phrase with object suffix // subject + verb + object; each line has one clause predicator, three constituents, and three words). The tropes of syntactic dependency and matching unified the seven lines in vv. 3-5 to form the first half of the poem. The first
half of the poem focuses on calling for help and stating the reasons why the divine intervention is necessary. In this section, the petitioner addresses the Deity directly:

1. Summons/general petition for saving act through God's name (v. 3)
2. Summons/call to God's attention to words of prayer (v. 4)
3. Motivations and descriptions of foreign enemies (v. 5).

The shift in the direction of speech marks a structural break in the poem. A pair of syntactically matching verbless clauses in v. 6 referring to God in third-person singular sets off the second paragraph from the first. The advantage of taking the line as the basic poetic building block is noted in vv. 6-7a where linguistic correspondence extends beyond the two lines/bicolon of v. 6 and splits the next two lines in v. 7. These three lines, vv. 6-7a, cannot be separated since v. 7a is in apposition to the objects “the supporter of my life” in v. 6b and the “helper” in line 6a. Without a shift in focus, the speech changes direction back to address God directly in the next two lines, v. 7b-8a. These two lines together form a syntactic entity; they are conditional clauses; v. 7b is a request (independent clause, protasis) and v. 8a is a promise to return the favor if the request is granted (dependent clauses, apodosis). Again, the standard bicolon system does not hold in this case as syntactic links uniting the concluding two lines, v. 9a-b, to the preceding line v. 8b. These causal clauses subordinate to the preceding line and serve as the conclusion of the section.

The second half of the poem reiterates the supporting arguments for the requests. In this section, five out of eight lines address the overhearers. The thematic progression is as follow:
4. Statement of confidence in God as the helper and protector (vv. 6-7a), addressed to the overhearers.

5. Petition for God to silence the enemies (v. 7b), addressed to God.

6. Promise of thanksgiving to God's name and voluntary sacrifice (v. 8), addressed to God.

7. The petitioner declares victory because the prayer is heard (v. 9), addressing the overhearers.

The First Half of the Poem (vv. 3-5)

Like many of the “I” prayer psalms, the imperatives dominate opening lines (save, listen, give ear). The repetitions of the imperatival clauses indicate the petitioner's urgent and earnest plea to the Deity. What stands out in the opening lines is the reference to the name of God, “by your name,” as the means for the saving act of God. The association between “your name” and “your might” invokes the Exodus covenant tradition of the divine name in these two opening lines, i.e., God's name is God's might that saves and judges (Deut 12:5, 11, 13, 14, 18, 21, 26).\footnote{131}

The name of God is often associated with God's power (cf. Pss 20:1b, 5a, 7b; 106:8; Jer 10:6, 16:21). The theology of the divine name might have prompted Hossfeld to suggest the setting of the forensic sense, i.e., the petition of a public judicial vindication.\footnote{132} O'Connor viewed the association of the terms בְּשִׁמְךָ “by your name” and בִּגְבוּרָתְךָ “in your might” as grammatically specific. He suggested that the noun phrase

\footnotetext{131}{Weiser, Psalms, 30-35.}
\footnotetext{132}{Hossfeld, Psalms II, 47-48.}
combinations in v. 3 “are separated into their component parts, usually two, and set in adjacent, not necessarily, matching lines.” Jeremiah 10:6 contains an example in which the combination of “name” and “might” occur in a single phrase:

מֵאֵַ֥ין כָמֵ֖וֹךָ יְהוִָ֑ה
גָּדַ֥וֹל אַתָ֛ה וְגָדַ֥וֹל שִׁמְךֵָ֖ בִגְבוּרָּה׃
There is none like you, O Yhwh.
You are great, and great is your name in might.

Verse 5. The petitioner identifies the enemies as זָרִַ֨ים (foreigners) and עְָ֭רִיצִים (dreadful ones/terrible ones); they are the cause of the petitioner’s suffering. A closest parallel to Ps 54:5 is Ps 86:14, but there it reads זֵ֘דִִ֤ים (insolent ones) instead of זָרִַ֨ים (foreigners):

אֱלהִִ֤ים זֵ֘דִִ֤ים קָּמוּֽעָלַֹּ֗י
וַעֲדִַּ֣ת עְָ֭רִיצִים בִקְשִּׁ֣וּ נַפְשִִׁ֑י
וְלֵ֖א שָמִּ֣וּךָ לְנֶגְדָּם׃
O God, the insolent rise against me.
The council of the ruthless ones have sought my life.
They do not set you before them.

However, if Ps 86:14 is a reworking of Ps 54:5, then the paleographical error between ר and ר might have occurred. Further, זָרִַ֨ים does not occur with עְָ֭רִיצִים anywhere else except here in Ps 86:14. The combinations of זָרִַ֨ים and עְָ֭רִיצִים can be found in Ezekiel and Isaiah. In Ezekiel 31:12a, this combination occurs in a single line:

וּכְרָתָּה זָרִּים עָרִיצֵַ֥י גוֹיִֵ֖ם וַּיִטְשִֺׁ֑ה
The foreigners – the most ruthless nations, have cut it down and left it.

Also in Ezekiel 28:7:

לָכֵֹּ֗ן הִנְנִי מֵבִִ֤יא עָלֶ֙יךָ זָרִּ֔ים עָרִיצֵֵ֖י גּוֹיִִ֑ם

133 O'Connor, Contour, 649.
Thus, I will bring the *foreigners* upon you, the most *ruthless* of the nations.

Another example is Isa 25:2-3:

כִִּ֣י שִַ֤מְתָ מֵעִיר֙ לַגָּּ֔ל קִרְיַָ֥ה בְצוּרֵָ֖ה לְמַפֵלִָ֑ה
אַרְמִ֤וֹן זָרִים֙ מֵעִ֔יר לְעוֹלָ֖ם לֵָ֖ם לַ֥א יִבָנֶּ֑ה׃
עַלֽכֵֵ֖ן יְכַבְדִּ֣וּךָ עַםֽעִָ֑ז
קִרְיַ֛ת גּוֹיִַ֥ם עָרִיצִֵ֖ים יִירָאּוּךָ׃

For you have made a city into a heap,
A fortified city into a ruin;
A palace of *foreigners* is a city no more, it will never be rebuilt.
Therefore a strong people will glorify you;
Cities of *ruthless* nations will revere you.

A clear example is in Isa 25:3 where the noun phrase combination of רָֽיוֹת and צֹֽרֶים is separated into two component parts and set in adjacent lines in Isa 25:5:

כְחִֹּ֣רֶב בְצָיּ֔וֹן שְׁאַ֥וֹן זָרִֵ֖ים תַכְנִִ֑יעַ
חֹ֚ורֶב בְצִֵּ֣ל עָ֔ב זְמִַ֥יר עָּרִיצִֵ֖ים יַעֲנֶּּ֑ה׃

Like heat in drought, you subdue the uproar of *foreigners*;
Like heat by the shadow of a cloud, the song of the *ruthless ones* is silenced.

Likewise, another example is Isaiah 29:5:

וְהָיָ֛ת כְאָבַָ֥ק דֵַ֖ק הֲמִ֣וֹן זָרִָ֑יִ
וּכְמִֹ֤ץ עֹבֵר֙ הֲמִ֣י עָּרִיצִּ֔ים
וְהָיֵָ֖ה לְפֶַ֥תַע פִתְאֹּם׃

But the multitude of your *foreigners* will become like fine dust,
And the multitude of the *ruthless ones* like the chaff that blows away;
And it will happen instantly,

The above-cited passages give strong arguments for the retaining of the MT רַֽיוֹת reading. The identity of the enemies in this psalm may play an important factor in the interpretation of the classic Individual Lament genre of the present psalm.
The first half of the poem concludes with the description of the אֱלֹהִים in v. 5c. The poet depicts the enemies as those who do not worship God.134 In the first half, the petitioner prays to God for help to remove the serious danger presented by the most ruthless foreigners who have sought to take his life, i.e., those who do not worship God.

Moving on to the second paragraph, vv. 6-8, Syntactic Description also agrees with the MT and BHS. This paragraph consists of eight poetic lines. The petitioner continues to address the overhearers, beginning in v. 5c, speaking about the Deity. The demonstrative particle אֵל (behold) sets off two verbless clauses in v. 6 that express the petitioner's confidence in God. In contrast to the enemies who “do not set God before them,” the petitioner considers God as the רֹעַ (helper) and חוֹזֶר (sustainer). These motivation statements are immediately followed by the petition for God to destroy/silence the enemies. The poem concludes with the promise of sacrifice and praise that, coupled with two causal clauses (syntactic dependency), expresses the petitioner's confidence that the prayer is heard.

Arguing against the classic Individual Lament designation of the present psalm, the motif of אֱלֹהִים and נָצָא נָצָאך prompted Briggs & Briggs to suggest that the present psalm is a prayer for national victory over the נָצָא נָצָאך of Babylonians in the earlier days of Josiah.135

134 Briggs and Briggs, Psalms, 2. 16.
135 Briggs and Briggs, Psalms, 2. 16-17.
2.4.3 Psalm 57

Be gracious to me, O God, be gracious to me,
Because in you I will seek refuge.
In the shadow of your wings I will seek refuge,
Until destruction passes by.
I will cry to God Most High,
To God who fulfills his purpose for me.
May he send from heaven and save me;
May he reproach one who crushes me. Selah.

May God send his kindness and his faithfulness.
I am among lions;
I lie down with the cannibal men who devour;
Their teeth are spears and arrows,
And their tongues are sharp swords.

Be exalted above the heavens, O God;
Your glory is over all the earth.
They set up a net for my feet;
My soul is bowed down;
They dug a pit before me;
They have fallen into its midst. Selah.

My heart is firm, O God,
my heart is firm;
I will sing praise, and I will sing praise!
Awake, my glory!
Awake, harp and lyre!
I will awaken the dawn.
I will praise you among the peoples O Lord;
I will sing praises to you among peoples.
For high to the heavens is your kindness
And to the clouds is your truth.

Be exalted above the heavens, O God;
Your glory is above all the earth.

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136 NRSV renders “destroying storms;” but יִיעֲבַֹ֥ר is in singular verb form; hence חָרָ֖ף (subject in plural form) should be taken collectively as a single entity.

137 In this sentence God is the subject of חֵרִֵּ֣ף; and שֹׁאֲפִִּ֣י is the object.

138 I interpret this line as a nominal verbless clause. LXX adds καὶ ἐρρύσατο and reads καὶ ἐρρύσατο τὴν ψυχήν μου ἐκ μέσου σκύμνφν (and rescues my soul from the midst of lion whelp).
Psalm 57

122+1 VV+Voc SD1 God
133 [PVS] SD1 God
123 [PhrV] SD1 God
123 [AVS] SD1 God

123 VO SD2; G1; M1 Overhearers
033 [O] SD2; G1; M1 Overhearers
233 VPV Overhearers
122 VO Overhearers
134 VSO Overhearers

134 [VP Phr] SD5 God
123 [SRed] M2; SD5 God
123 [SRed] M2; SD5 God
012+1 VP+Voc G2; R1 God
123 PredS G2; R2 God

122 VO God
133 VPO SD7 God
122 [VP] SD7 God

122 VO R3; M3 God
122 VO R3; M3 God
222 V God
111+1 V+Voc M4 Self
111+1 V+Voc M4 Instruments

122 VO God

122+1 VP+Voc SD8; M5 God
123 VP SD8; M5 God
133 [PredPS] SD8; G3; M6 God
022 [PS] SD8; G3; M6 God
122+1 VP+Voc R1 God
123 PredS R2 God
Psalm 57 contains no lineation difficulties that affect its surface structure. All of the lines are delineated within the constraints of Syntactic Description. Line Types: all the lines are delineated within the constraints of zero to three clause predictors, two to four constituents, and two to five units per line. The majority of the lines contain one to two clause predictors, two to three constituents, and two to three units.

1. Clause predictors
   a) zero clause predictor: 2/31 lines
   b) one clause predictor: 20/31 lines
   c) two clause predictors: 8/31 lines
   d) three clause predictors: 1/31 lines

2. Constituents
   a) two constituents: 18/31 lines
   b) three constituents: 12/31 lines
   c) four constituents: 1/31 lines

3. Units
   a) two units: 10/31 lines
   b) three units: 18/31 lines
   c) four units: 2/31 lines
   d) five units: 1/31 lines

4. Vocatives:
1. God: four occurrences
2. Self: one occurrence
3. Lord: one occurrence
4. Instruments: one occurrence

Gross Structure

The two different focuses of this psalm have led scholars to consider Psalm 57 as
a composite psalm consisting of a community lament/prayer for the deliverance from
enemies, vv. 2-5, and a song of praise/national hymn in a later peacetime, vv. 6-12.\(^{139}\)

Scholars have proposed various views regarding the identity of the petitioner.
The motif of seeking shelter under the shadow of God's wings (וּבְצֵּלֽכְנָפֶַ֥יךָ אֶחְסִֶ֑ה) in v. 2, might have prompted Kraus to assert
that the psalm is a prayer of a falsely accused person who sought asylum overnight in the
Temple court. Kraus links the image depicted by (וּבְצֵּלֽכְנָפֶַ֥יךָ אֶחְסִֶ֑ה) to the sanctuary image
of the throne of the cherubim in Isaiah 6.\(^{140}\) This interpretation is difficult to assess since
the cherubim are not the representation of the Deity. In many other texts in the Psalter,
the Deity is often metaphorically depicted as a bird whose wings provide protection (Pss
17:8; 34:9, 36:8; 61:5; 63:7; 91:4).\(^{141}\)

In line with the superscription, claiming that Ps 57 contains royal motifs similar to
Psalms 54, 56, 58, and 59, Dahood interprets this psalm as the lament of a king, who was
harassed by malicious slanderers. On the other hand, Tate's view is encompassing; he

\(^{139}\) Briggs and Briggs, Psalms, 2. 36-37. Similarly, Beat Weber, “Formgeschichtliche und sprachliche
Beobachtungen zu Psalm 57,” SJOT 15/2 (2001) 295-305. For an opposing view, see Tate, Psalms, 75.
\(^{140}\) Kraus, Psalms, 530-31.
\(^{141}\) So Gerstenberger, Psalms II, 230; Hossfeld and Zenger, Psalms II, 71-73.
believes that the original writer(s) of Psalm 57 might have had a king in mind but the psalm was democratized for any person who faces similar struggles. According to Tate, this psalm may be read in the family, group rituals, as well as in the Temple.\textsuperscript{142}

For the most part, the poem is addressed to the Deity; the overearners are directly addressed in the second part of the first paragraph (speaking about God in third-person singular forms in vv. 3-4). I divide this thirty-line poem into two main paragraphs; each of the two equal paragraph contains 15 lines (vv. 2-6; vv. 7-12) and ends with the refrain (vv. 6, 12). The refrain is the praise that God be exalted and takes dominion of the earth.\textsuperscript{143} I divide each main paragraph into three smaller paragraphs:

I. First main paragraph (vv. 2-6; 15 lines)
   1. Summons and petition to seek refuge and protection addressed to the Deity (v. 2)
   2. Wishes for the divine intervention addressed to the Overhearers (vv. 3-4)
   3. Descriptions of the current crisis and the enemies (v. 5)

Refrain of hymnic praise (v. 6)

II. Second main paragraph (vv. 7-12; 15 lines)
   1. The imprecations against the enemies (v. 7)
   2. Statements of confidence and praise addressed to the Deity (vv. 8-9)
   3. Vow of praise (vv. 10-11)

Refrain of hymnic praise (v. 12)

\textsuperscript{142} Tate, \textit{Psalms}, 75.
\textsuperscript{143} Ps 57:8-11 is similar to Ps 108:2-6.
I. *First main paragraph (vv. 2-6; 15 lines)*: the first-person singular verbs, and first-person singular object suffixes, and first-person singular possessive suffixes dominate the first half of the psalm. The motifs of seeking shelter, protection, and desire for divine intervention dominate the first paragraph of the poem. The opening lines carry a distressing mood; the petitioner addresses the Deity asking for a place of refuge and protection. The speech then changes direction to address the overhearers with a series of requests for divine intervention.

The psalm begins with an initial plea to God for a temporary place of refuge until the crisis is over, v. 2. The opening lines are syntactically united as the first sub-unit in the first half of the poem; one notes the usual syntactical arrangement of vocative-imperative combination plus the causal clauses to follow.

Immediately after the initial call, the speech changes direction going from speaking to God in the direct address using second-person singular forms to speaking about God using the third-person singular forms, vv. 3-4. Zenger interprets this switch as an oblique form of address as though the speech was still directly addressed to God.\textsuperscript{144}

While Zenger's view might be possible within the larger context of the psalm, this switching from the second to third person in these five poetic lines in vv. 3-4 is deliberate.

\textsuperscript{144} Hossfeld and Zenger, *Psalms II*, 73. It is interesting to note that in the same commentary, *Psalms II*, the two co-authors hold different view regarding the phenomena of the switching from the second-person singular to the third-person singular. How does one interprete the the latter form? Is it the “speaking to God” oblique form of direct address or the “speaking of God” direct address form, i.e., referring to God when speaking to the audience? In Ps 54:6, Hossfeld interpreted the switch from second to third-person as going from “to God” to “of God,” i.e., the psalmist turns from “speaking to God” to “speaking of God” thus direct his speech to the public.
The six lines in vv. 3-4 are the petitioner’s wishes for Most High God, אֱלֹהֵי עֶלְיוֹן, to intervene. This same title found in Gen 14:18-22 when Melchizedek, king of Salem, brought Abram tithes and bread and wine; he spoke to Abram referring to the Most High God in third person (cf. Deut 32:8-9; 2 Sam 22:14; Pss 7:17; 97:9). There is no textual evidence in the MT that God is directly addressed as “the Most High God.” Vv. 3-4 hinted at the presence of a third party audience who play a passive role in overhearing the dialogue; it is to this third party listeners that the psalmist sought to explain the reasons for the petition, and at the same time identified the Deity to whom the call is made. The psalmist thus professed publicly the appeal for God’s providence and protection, the Most High God who creates and has dominion over the heaven and earth.

The next four lines, v. 5, contain a series of three nominal clauses introducing a change of focus from speaking about God to speaking about the psalmist’s crisis. The petitioner depicts the enemies metaphorically as ferocious cannibals with sharp teeth and tongues (probably fully armed military troops). The refrain of hymnic praise in the next two lines, v. 6, ends the first half of the psalm.

II. Second half of the psalm (vv. 7-12; 15 lines)

In the second paragraph, the psalmist returns to address the Deity, describing the current crisis, i.e., the oppression of enemies. The references to the “I” and “They” parties mark the shift in focus. The mood of this section moved from negative to positive in the second half; the refrain in v. 6 marks the turning point of the mood.

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145 Hossfeld and Zenger, Psalms II, 73.
The focus on the deeds of the enemies via the use of third-person plural of the verbs in v. 7 marks the second half of the poem. The petitioner complains that the enemies have ensnared the petitioner; however, the petitioner expresses the confidence that the enemies will fall by their own trap at the end.

The hymnic elements of praise in vv. 8-12 are heavily troped and thus unite the second half of the psalm (cf. Ps 108:2-6). The dominance of praise elements in this section has prompted commentators to suggest that the psalm is a composite of prayer for protection and of song of praise. The repetition of the refrain in v. 12 concludes the psalm.

146 Briggs and Briggs, Psalms, 2:36-37.
2.5 Syntactic Descriptions of the Remaining Seventeen Individual Laments

Psalm 5

1 Give ear to my words, O LORD; give heed to my sighing.
2 Listen to the sound of my cry, my King and my God, for to you I pray.
3 O LORD, in the morning you hear my voice; in the morning I plead my case to you, and watch.
4 For you are not a God who delights in wickedness; evil will not sojourn with you.
5 The boastful will not stand before your eyes; you hate all evildoers.
6 You destroy those who speak lies; O LORD, you abhor the bloodthirsty and deceitful.
7 But I, through the abundance of your steadfast love, will enter your house, I will bow down toward your holy temple in awe of you.
8 Lead me, O LORD, in your righteousness because of my enemies; make your way straight before me.
9 For there is no truth in their mouths; their hearts are destruction; their throats are open graves; they flatter with their tongues.
10 Make them bear their guilt, O God; let them fall by their own counsels; because of their many transgressions cast them out, for they have rebelled against you.

\[\text{147 The editors of the BHS suggest the omission of the divine name for the sake of meter. I found no textual support to concur.}\]

\[\text{148 Kraus is in agreement with two MSS; he omits אֵּל and reads “For you do not take pleasure in wickedness” for the sake of meter. I found no textual support to amend the text; this line fits within the constraint of Syntactic Description.}\]

\[\text{149 This shift from second-person to third-person singular is probably a mistake. I agree with the NRSV’s reading of second-person singular אֶשְׁתַּחֲוֶַ֥ה to second-person singular אֶשְׁתַּחֲוֶַ֥ה in light of אֶשְׁתַּחֲוֶַ֥ה in the preceeding line.}\]

\[\text{150 הַוְשֵׁ֥ר (Kethibh) is read as הַיְ֯שַׁר (Qerê) 2ms Hiph Impv.}\]

\[\text{151 LXX adds κύριε at the end, perhaps for the sake of meter. There is no other textual support for this addition; the MT is retained.}\]
11 But let all who take refuge in you rejoice; let them ever sing for joy.

Spread your protection over them, so that those who love your name may exult in you.

12 For you bless the righteous, O LORD; you cover them with favor as with a shield.
Psalm 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verse</th>
<th>Syntactic Structure</th>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2:122+1</td>
<td>VO+Voc</td>
<td>SI1</td>
<td>The entire poem is addressed to the Deity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:122</td>
<td>OV</td>
<td>SI1</td>
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<td>VP+Voc</td>
<td>SD1; SI2</td>
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<td>SD3</td>
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</tr>
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</tr>
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<td>7:134</td>
<td>VPhrA</td>
<td>SD4</td>
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<td>SI3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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The entire poem is addressed to the Deity.
Line Types: all the lines are delineated within the constraints of zero to two clause predicators, one to four constituents, and one to four units per line. There are seven lines containing two clause predicators, but six of these lines each contain a vocative. The majority of the lines contain one clause predicator, two to three constituents, and two to four units.

1. Clause predicators:
   a) zero clause predicator: 1/32 lines
   b) one clause predicator: 24/32 lines
   c) two clause predicators: 7/32 lines

2. Constituents:
   a) two constituents: 19/32 lines
   b) three constituents: 10/32 lines
   c) four constituents: 3/32 lines

3. Units:
   a) two units: 12/32 lines
   b) three units: 9/32 lines
   c) four units: 10/32 lines
   d) five units: 1/32 lines

4. Vocatives:
   5. Yhwh: four occurrences
   6. King and God: one occurrence
   7. God: one occurrence
Gross Structure

The poem is a monologue addressed to the Deity. I divide this thirty-two-line poem into two halves. The first paragraph contains 18 lines (vv. 2-9) and the second paragraph contains 14 lines (vv. 10-13). Similar to other psalms of individual prayers in the present study, the first person singular prefix and suffix verbal forms and the imperatives with first singular suffix dominate the first half of the poem. In contrast, the “they” (enemies and friends) third person plural prefix and suffix verbal forms dominate the second half. The poem ends with the statements of confidence in the Deity. I further divide each main part of the poem into three smaller paragraphs:

I. First half paragraph (vv. 2-9; 18 lines)
   1. Summons and petition to seek help (v. 2)
   2. Statements of confidence, God will destroy the wicked ones (vv. 3-7)
   3. Vow of faithfulness and petition for a righteous living (v. 5)

II. Second half paragraph (vv. 10-13; 14 lines)
   4. The complaints against the enemies (v. 10)
   5. Petition for the enemies to be destroyed (v. 11)
   6. Wishes for friends (v. 12)
   7. Statement of confidence (v. 13)
Hear a just cause, O LORD; 
attend to my cry; 
give ear to my prayer 
from lips free of deceit. 
From you let my vindication come; 
let your eyes see the right. 
If you try my heart, 
if you visit me by night, 
if you test me, you will find no wickedness in me; 
my mouth does not transgress. 
As for what others do, by the word of your lips 
I have avoided the ways of the violent. 
My steps have held fast to your paths; 
my feet have not slipped. 
I call upon you, for you will answer me, O God; 
incline your ear to me, hear my words. 
Wondrously show your steadfast love, 
O savior of those who seek refuge from their 
adversaries at your right hand. 
Guard me as the apple of the eye; 
hide me in the shadow of your wings, 
from the wicked who despoil me, 
my deadly enemies who surround me. 
They close their hearts to pity; 
with their mouths they speak arrogantly. 
They track me down; now they surround me; 
they set their eyes to cast me to the ground. 
They are like a lion eager to tear, 
like a young lion lurking in ambush. 
Rise up, O LORD, 
confront them, overthrow them! 
By your sword deliver my life from the wicked,
from mortals—by your hand, O LORD—
from mortals whose portion in life is in this world.
May their bellies be filled with what you have stored up
for them;
may their children have more than enough;
may they leave something over to their little ones.
As for me, I shall behold your face in righteousness;
when I awake I shall be satisfied, beholding your likeness.

The meaning of these two lines, v. 14a-b, are uncertain due to textual corruption.
Psalm 17

The entire poem is addressed to the Deity.
Lineation:

All of the lines in Psalm 17 are delineated within the constraints of zero to two clause predicators, two to four constituents, and one to four units per line. The majority of the lines contain one clause predicator.

1. Clause predicators
   a) zero clause predicator: 4/40 lines
   b) one clause predicator: 28/40 lines
   c) two clause predicators: 8/40 lines

2. Constituents
   a) two constituents: 25/40 lines
   b) three constituents: 14/40 lines
   c) four constituents: 1/40 lines

3. Units
   a) two units: 13/40 lines
   b) three units: 17/40 lines
   c) four units: 10/40 lines

4. Vocatives:
   a) Yhwh: three occurrences
   b) God: one occurrence
   c) Savior: one occurrence

Gross Structure
The poem is a monologue addressed to God. The petitioner prays for divine protection and deliverance for himself and his friends. I divide this forty-line poem into two main paragraphs (vv. 1-9, vv. 10-15). The first-person singular, and second-person singular forms dominate the first half and the ending of the poem. The third-person plural forms, i.e., the enemies, dominate the second half of the poem. I further divide each main paragraph into three smaller paragraphs:

I. First main paragraph (vv. 1-9; 22 lines)
   4. Summons and general petition (v. 1)
   5. Attestation of innocence (vv. 3-5)
   6. Petition for divine protection (v. 6-9)

II. Second main paragraph (vv. 10-15; 18 lines)
   8. Complaints against the enemies (v. 7)
   9. Petition for God to bring down the enemies and rescue petitioner (v. 13-14b)
   10. Wishes for friends (v. 14c-14e)
   11. Statement of confidence (v. 15)
Psalm 35

1 Contend, O LORD, with those who contend with me; 
fight against those who fight against me!

2 Take hold of shield and buckler, 
and rise up to help me!

3 Draw the spear and javelin against my pursuers; 
say to my soul, 
“I am your salvation.”

4 Let them be put to shame and dishonor who seek after my life. 
Let them be turned back and confounded who devise evil against me.

5 Let them be like chaff before the wind, 
with the angel of the LORD driving them on.

6 Let their way be dark and slippery, 
with the angel of the LORD pursuing them.

7 For without cause they hid their net for me; 
without cause they dug a pit for my life.

8 Let ruin come on them unawares. 
And let the net that they hid ensnare them; 
let them fall in it—to their ruin.

9 Then my soul shall rejoice in the LORD, 
exulting in his deliverance.

10 All my bones shall say, 
―O LORD, who is like you? You deliver the weak from those too strong for them, 
the weak and needy from those who despoil them.‖

11 Malicious witnesses rise up; 
they ask me about things I do not know.

12 They repay me evil for good; 
my soul is forlorn.

13 But as for me, when they were sick, I wore sackcloth; 
I afflicted myself with fasting.

I prayed with head bowed on my bosom,

157 This is a difficult line; השם (“pit”) is transposed to the next line.

158 Lit. “My prayer returned upon my bosom.”
as though I grieved for a friend or a brother; I went about as one who laments for a mother, bowed down and in mourning.

15 But at my stumbling they gathered in glee, they gathered together against me; ruffians whom I did not know tore at me without ceasing;

16 they impiouslymocked more and more, gnashing at me with their teeth.

17 How long, O LORD, will you look on? Rescue me from their ravages, my life from the lions!

18 Then I will thank you in the great congregation; in the mighty throng I will praise you.

19 Do not let my treacherous enemies rejoice over me, or those who hate me without cause wink the eye.

20 For they do not speak peace, but they conceive deceitful words against those who are quiet in the land.

21 They open wide their mouths against me; they say, “Aha, Aha, our eyes have seen it.”

22 You have seen, O LORD; do not be silent! O Lord, do not be far from me!

23 Wake up! Bestir yourself for my defense, for my cause, my God and my Lord!

24 Vindicate me, O LORD, my God, according to your righteousness, and do not let them rejoice over me.

25 Do not let them say to themselves, “Aha, we have our heart's desire.”

Do not let them say, “We have swallowed you up.”

26 Let all those who rejoice at my calamity be put to shame and confusion; let those who exalt themselves against me be clothed with shame and dishonor.
Let those who desire my vindication shout for joy and be glad,
and say evermore, “Great is the LORD, who delights in the welfare of his servant.”
Then my tongue shall tell of your righteousness and of your praise all day long.
The entire psalm is addressed to the Deity.
אֲדֹנָי כַּה תֵּרָא
הָשִִּׁיבָה נְּ֭פְשִׁי מִשֵֹֻ֜וֶאֵיהִֶ֑ם
מִכְפִירִֹּ֗ים יְחִידָתִּי׃
אְ֭וֹדְךָ בְּקָהִָּ֣ל רִָ֑ב
בְעֵ֖ם עָצִּ֣וּם אֲהָלְלֶּךָ׃
אּלֽיִשְׁמְחוּֽלִִּ֣י אֹיְבִּ֣י שִֶׁ֑קֶר
שֹנְאַ֥י חִ֝מָֹ֗ם יִקְרְצוּֽעָּיִן׃
וּכִִ֤י לַ֥א שָׁלֹּ֗וֹם יְדַ֫בֵַ֥ר
וְעַ֥ל רִגְעֵיֽאִֶ֑רֶץ
דִבְרֵַ֥י מִ֝רְמוֹת יחֲשֹׁבּוּן׃
וְיֵָ֣֮בִֹ֤שׁוּ וְיחְפְרִֵ֨י שְׁמֵחֵֵּ֪י רָעַָ֫תִַ֥י
יִּלְבְשׁוּֽבַֹ֥שֶׁת וּכְלִםִָ֑ה
הּםגְדִילִַ֥ים עָלָּי׃
שָׁרִ֨ימוּ וְיִשְמְחוָּ֮ חֲפֵצֵֵּ֪י צִַ֫דְקִַ֥י
וְיֹאמְרִּ֣וּ תְָ֭מִיד
יִגְדִּ֣ל يְהוַָ֑ה
הֶ֝חָפֵֹּ֗ץ שְׁלִּ֣וֹם עבְדּוֹ׃
וּלְשׁוֹנִי תֶהְגִֶּּ֣ה צִדְקֶ
כָלֽה֝יוֹם תְהִלָתֶּךָ׃
Psalm 35 contains no lineation difficulties that affect its surface structure; most of the lines are delineated within the constraints of zero to two clause predicates, one to four constituents, and one to five units per line. The majority of the lines contain one clause predicate, two to three constituents, and two to four units.

1. Clause predicates
   a) zero clause predicate: 9/71 lines
   b) one clause predicate: 51/71 lines
   c) two clause predicates: 11/71 lines

2. Constituents
   a) one constituent: 2/71 lines
   b) two constituents: 37/71 lines
   c) three constituents: 29/71 lines
   d) four constituents: 3/71 lines

3. Units
   a) two units: 22/71 lines
   b) three units: 35/71 lines
   c) four units: 13/71 lines
   d) five units: 1/71 lines

4. Vocatives:
   a) Yhwh: four occurrences
   b) Lord: two occurrences
c) My God and my Lord: one occurrence

d) Yhwh my God: one occurrence

Gross Structure

The poem is a monologue addressed to the Deity. I divide this seventy-one-line poem into ten paragraphs:

1. First paragraph (vv. 1-3; 7 lines): summons and petition to seek help in fighting against the pursuers.
2. Second paragraph (vv. 4-8; 13 lines): curses against the enemies.
3. Third paragraph (vv. 9-10; 6 lines): praises.
4. Fourth paragraph (vv. 11-14; 9 lines): complaints about betrayed by the enemies.
5. Fifth paragraph (vv. 15-16; 6 lines): complaints about the enemies.
6. Sixth paragraph (vv. 17-18; 5 lines): petition for deliverance and promise of praise.
7. Seventh paragraph (vv. 19-21; 7 lines): imprecations and complaints against enemies.
8. Eighth paragraph (vv. 22-24; 6 lines): petition for divine judgment.
10. Tenth paragraph (vv. 27-28; 5 lines): wishes for friends and vow of praise.
Psalm 43

1 Vindicate me, O God,
and defend my cause against an ungodly people;
from those who are deceitful and unjust deliver me!
2 For you are the God in whom I take refuge;
why have you cast me off?

Why must I walk about mournfully
because of the oppression of the enemy?
3 O send out your light and your truth;
let them lead me;
let them bring me to your holy hill
and to your dwelling.
4 Then I will go to the altar of God,
to God my exceeding joy;
and I will praise you with the harp, O God, my God.
5 Why are you cast down, O my soul,
and why are you disquieted within me?
Hope in God;
for I shall again praise him,
my help and my God.

162 This psalm contains no textual difficulties that affect its lineation and line structures.
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<td>24</td>
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Psalm 43
Lineation:

All of the lines are delineated within the constraints of zero to two clause predicates, one to four constituents, and one to four units per line. The majority of the lines contain one clause predicator, two constituents, and two to three units.

1. Clause predicates
   a) zero clause predicator: 4/19 lines
   b) one clause predicator: 12/19 lines
   c) two clause predicates: 3/19 lines

2. Constituents
   a) one constituent: 2/19 lines
   b) two constituents: 13/19 lines
   c) three constituents: 4/19 lines

3. Units
   a) two units: 9/19 lines
   b) three units: 9/19 lines
   c) four units: 1/19 lines

4. Vocatives:
   a) God: two occurrences
   b) Self: one occurrence
Gross Structure:

I divide this nineteen-line poem into three paragraphs. The poem is a monologue addressed to God in the first two paragraphs (vv. 1-2; 3-4); the last paragraph is the psalmist's self-reflection (v. 5).

I. First paragraph (vv. 1-2; 7 lines)
   1. Summons and petition to seek vindication addressed to the Deity (v. 1)
   2. Complaints (v. 2)

II. Second paragraph (vv. 3-4; 7 lines)
   1. Petition (v. 3)
   2. Praise (v. 4)

II. Third paragraph (v. 5; 5 lines): self-addressed statement of confidence and promise of praise.
Psalm 51

1 Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.

2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.

3 For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.

4 Against you, you alone, have I sinned, and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are justified in your sentence and blameless when you pass judgment.

5 Indeed, I was born guilty, a sinner when my mother conceived me.

6 You desire truth in the inward being; therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart.

7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

8 Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have crushed rejoice.

9 Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities.

10 Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me.

11 Do not cast me away from your presence, and do not take your holy spirit from me.

12 Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and sustain in me a willing spirit.

13 Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you.

14 Deliver me from bloodshed, O God, O God of my salvation, and my tongue will sing aloud of your deliverance.

163 To be read as עָרְבָה, infinitive absolute, conveying an adverbial sense “thoroughly.”

164 נָבָה, can be rendered to convey a sense of result “thus/therefore”
15 O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise.

16 For you have no delight in sacrifice; if I were to give a burnt offering, you would not be pleased.

17 The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

18 Do good to Zion in your good pleasure; rebuild the walls of Jerusalem,

19 then you will delight in right sacrifices, in burnt offerings and whole burnt offerings; then bulls will be offered on your altar.
consume all the Gentiles.

The entire poem is addressed to the Deity.
Psalm 51 contains no textual difficulties that affect its surface structure; most of the lines are delineated within the constraints of zero to two clause predicates, one to four constituents, and one to four units per line. The majority of the lines contain one clause predicate, two to three constituents, and two to four units.

1. Clause predicates
   a) zero clause predicate: 2/43 lines
   b) one clause predicate: 34/43 lines
   c) two clause predicates: 7/43 lines

2. Constituents
   a) one constituent: 2/43 lines
   b) two constituents: 20/43 lines
   c) three constituents: 20/43 lines
   d) four constituents: 1/43 lines

3. Units
   a) two units: 9/43 lines
   b) three units: 26/43 lines
   c) four units: 8/43 lines

4. Vocatives:
   a) God: four occurrences
   b) Lord: one occurrence

Gross Structure

I divide this forty-three-line poem into three paragraphs:
I. First main paragraph (vv. 3-7; 12 lines)
   1. Summonss and petition to seek cleansing from sin (vv. 3-5)
   2. Confession of sin (vv. 6-7)

II. Second main paragraph (vv. 8-15; 16 lines)
   1. Petition for cleansing from sin (vv. 8-11)
   2. Petition for new spirit (vv. 12-14)
   3. Vow of service (v. 15)

III. Third main paragraph (vv. 16-21; 15 lines)
   1. Petition for new life (v. 16a)
   2. Promise of praise and offering (vv. 16b-19)
   3. Petition for the rebuilding of Zion (v. 20)
   4. Promise of praise (v. 21)
Give ear to my prayer, O God; do not hide yourself from my supplication. Attend to me, and answer me; I am troubled in my complaint. I am distraught by the noise of the enemy, because of the clamor of the wicked. For they bring trouble upon me, and in anger they cherish enmity against me.

My heart is in anguish within me, the terrors of death have fallen upon me. Fear and trembling come upon me, and horror overwhelms me.

And I say, “O that I had wings like a dove! I would fly away and be at rest; truly, I would flee far away; I would lodge in the wilderness; Selah I would hurry to find a shelter for myself from the raging wind and tempest.”

Confuse, O Lord, confound their speech; for I see violence and strife in the city.

Day and night they go around it on its walls, and iniquity and trouble are within it; ruin is in its midst; oppression and fraud do not depart from its marketplace.

It is not enemies who taunt me, I could bear that; it is not adversaries who deal insolently with me—I could hide from them.

But it is you, my equal, my companion, my familiar friend, with whom I kept pleasant company; we walked in the house of God with the throng.

Let death come upon them; let them go down alive to Sheol; for evil is in their homes and in their hearts.

The NRSV unnecessarily transposes מִרְפֵּא to the next line. The MT’s lineation reads: “I am troubled in my complaint; and I am distraught by the noise of the enemy.”
But I call upon God, and the LORD will save me.  
Evening and morning and at noon I utter my complaint and moan, and he will hear my voice.  
He will redeem me unharmed from the battle that I wage, for many are arrayed against me.  
God, who is enthroned from of old, Selah will hear, and will humble them.  
because they do not change, and do not fear God.  
My companion laid hands on a friend and violated a covenant with me  
with speech smoother than butter, but with a heart set on war;  
with words that were softer than oil, but in fact were drawn swords.  
Cast your burden on the LORD, and he will sustain you; he will never permit the righteous to be moved.  
But you, O God, will cast them down into the lowest pit; the bloodthirsty and treacherous shall not live out half their days.  
But I will trust in you.
Psalm 55

וְֽלָֽיָֽיָּ֣מִַ֥ישׁ מֵ֝רְחֹבָֹּ֗הּ תִֹּ֣ךְ וּמִרְמָּ֣ה׃
כִִ֤י לּאֽאוֹיֵַ֥ב יְחָּרְפֵֹּ֗נִי וְאֶַ֫שַָֻ֥א אְֵ֭בֶר כיוֹנָֹּ֗ה אָעַ֥וּפָה וְאֶשְׁכֹּנָה׃
בְבֵַ֥ית אֱ֝להִֹּ֗ים נְהלֵַ֥ךְ בְרָּגֶשׁ׃
בְּפֵֵ֖י אְֲּ֭דֹנָי פלִּ֣ג לְשׁוֹנִָ֑ם אְֲּ֭נִי אֶלֽהִִּ֣ים אֶקְרִָ֑א הֶזִִּּין אְֱּ֭להִים תְֹפֵלָתִִ֑י וְֵאִ֮מַּוֹת מִָֹ֣וֶת נָפְלַ֥וּ עָלָּי׃
אָרִֵ֖יד בְשִיחִִּ֣י וְאָהִּים׃
עִֶ֤רֶב וָבִֹּ֣קֶר וְְ֭צָהֳריִם יִרְאִָּ֣ה וְָּ֭רעד יִָּ֣בֹא בִִ֑י אָלִֵ֖ין בםִדְבִָּ֣ר סֶּלָה׃
הֵקְשִִּׁ֣יבָה לִִּ֣י ועֲנִֵ֑נִי ל בְקִרְבָּהּ׃
אָחִִּ֣ישָׁה מִפְלִָּ֣ט לִִ֑י לְִּ֭בִי יָחִִּ֣יל בְקִרְבִִ֑י ואֹמֹּ֗ר מִיֽיֵּין hяем אֲזִִּ֣ינָה אְֱּ֭להִים תְֹפֵלָתִִ֑י וְֵאִ֮מַּוֹת מִָֹ֣וֶת נָפְלַ֥וּ עָלָּי׃
אָרִֵ֖יד בְשִיחִִּ֣י וְאָהִּים׃
עִֶ֤רֶב וָבִֹּ֣קֶר וְְ֭צָהֳריִם יִרְאִָּ֣ה וְָּ֭רעד יִָּ֣בֹא בִִ֑י אָלִֵ֖ין בםִדְבִָּ֣ר סֶּלָה׃
הֵקְשִִּׁ֣יבָה לִִּ֣י ועֲנִֵ֑נִי ל בְקִרְבָּהּ׃
אָחִִּ֣ישָׁה מִפְלִָּ֣ט לִִ֑י לְִּ֭בִי יָחִִּ֣יל בְקִרְבִִ֑י ואֹמֹּ֗ר מִיֽיֵּין hием אֲזִִּ֣ינָה אְֱּ֭להִים תְֹפֵלָתִִ֑י וְֵאִ֮מַּוֹת מִָֹ֣וֶת נָפְלַ֥וּ עָלָּי׃
אָרִֵ֖יד בְשִיחִִּ֣י וְאָהִּים׃
עִֶ֤רֶב וָבִֹּ֣קֶר וְְ֭צָהֳריִם יִרְאִָּ֣ה וְָּ֭רעד יִָּ֣בֹא בִִ֑י אָלִֵ֖ין בםִדְבִָּ֣ר סֶּלָה׃
הֵקְשִִּׁ֣יבָה לִִּ֣י ועֲנִֵ֑נִי ל בְקִרְבָּהּ׃
אָחִִּ֣ישָׁה מִפְלִָּ֣ט לִִ֑י לְִּ֭בִי יָחִִּ֣יל בְקִרְבִִ֑י ואֹמֹּ֗ר מִיֽיֵּין hием אֲזִִּ֣ינָה אְֱּ֭להִים תְֹפֵלָתִִ֑י וְֵאִ֮מַּוֹת מִָֹ֣וֶת נָפְלַ֥וּ עָלָּי׃
אָרִֵ֖יד בְשִיחִִּ֣י וְאָהִּים׃
עִֶ֤רֶב וָבִֹּ֣קֶר וְְ֭צָהֳריִם יִרְאִָּ֣ה וְָּ֭רעד יִָּ֣בֹא בִִ֑י אָלִֵ֖ין בםִדְבִָּ֣ר סֶּלָה׃
הֵקְשִִּׁ֣יבָה לִִּ֣י ועֲנִֵ֑נִי ל בְקִרְבָּהּ׃
אָחִִּ֣ישָׁה מִפְלִָּ֣ט לִִ֑י L

122+1 VO+Voc God
122 [VP] God
133 VO[V] God
133 VP[V] SD2 God
012 [Phr] SD2 God
013 [Phr] SD2 God
133 [VPO] SD2 God
122 [PV] SD2 God
123 SRed God
133 SVO M1 God
133 SVO M1 God
122 VS God
244 V[SVO] God
244 PV[V] God
122 VA God
122 VP God
122 VP SD3 God
123 [Phr] SD3 God
233+1 VVO+Voc SD4 God
134 [VOP] SD4 God
134 PVO God
123 SRed God
122 SRed God
134 [VPS] God
223 SV[V] God
223 S[OV] SD5 God
122 [VP] SD5 God
133 SRed SD6 Enemy
012 [Phr] SD6 Enemy
134 AVO SD6 Enemy
134 PVP SD6 Enemy
122 VP M5 Overhearers
123 VP SD9; M5 Overhearers
123 [SRed] SD9 Overhearers
133 SSV Overhearers
122 [SV] Overhearers
013 [Phr] Overhearers
222 VV Overhearers
122 [VO] Overhearers
<table>
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<th>תשובות</th>
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<td>VPhrO</td>
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<td>023</td>
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<td>122</td>
<td>[V     ]</td>
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<td>133</td>
<td>SVO</td>
<td>SD18</td>
<td>Overhearers</td>
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</table>
Psalm 55 contains no textual difficulties that affect its surface structure; most of the lines are delineated within the constraints of zero to two clause predicators, one to four constituents, and one to four units per line. The majority of the lines contain one clause predicator, two to three constituents, and two to four units.

1. Clause predicators
   a) zero clause predicator: 6/58 lines
   b) one clause predicator: 45/58 lines
   c) two clause predicators: 6/58 lines
   d) three clause predicators: 1/58 lines

2. Constituents
   a) one constituent: 4/58 lines
   b) two constituents: 29/58 lines
   c) three constituents: 20/58 lines
   d) four constituents: 5/58 lines

3. Units
   a) two units: 21/58 lines
   b) three units: 26/58 lines
   c) four units: 10/58 lines
   d) five units: 1/58 lines

4. Vocatives:
   a) God: two occurrences
   b) Lord: one occurrence
I divide this fifty-eight-line poem into eight paragraphs:

I. First paragraph (vv. 2-4; 8 lines)
   1. Summons and petition (v. 2)
   2. Complaints about current crisis (vv. 3-4)

II. Second paragraph (vv. 5-9; 10 lines)
   1. Complaints about current condition (vv. 5-6)
   2. Desire to escape (vv. 7-9)

III. Third paragraph (vv. 10-13; 9 lines)
   1. Petition for enemies to be punished (vv. 10-12)
   2. The enemy is in the midst of the community (v. 13)

IV. Fourth paragraph (vv. 14-16; 7 lines)
   1. Enemy is identified as former friend (vv. 14-15)
   2. Imprecations against enemies (v. 16)

V. Fifth paragraph (vv. 17-20b; 9 lines)
   1. Vow to keep on praying (vv. 17-18)
   2. Confidence God will hear prayers (vv. 19-20)

VI. Sixth paragraph (vv. 21-22; 8 lines): description of the ungodly

VII. Seventh paragraph (vv. 23-24; 7 lines): statement of confidence in God.
Psalm 56

1 Be gracious to me, O God, for people trample on me;
2 all day long foes oppress me;
3 when I am afraid, I put my trust in you.
4 In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I am not afraid;
5 what can flesh do to me?
6 All day long they seek to injure my cause; all their thoughts are against me for evil.
7 They stir up strife, they lurk, they watch my steps.
As they hoped to have my life, so repay them for their crime;
8 You have kept count of my tossings; put my tears in your bottle. Are they not in your record?
9 Then my enemies will retreat in the day when I call. This I know, that God is for me.
10 In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I am not afraid. What can a mere mortal do to me?
11 My vows to you I must perform, O God; I will render thank offerings to you.
12 For you have delivered my soul from death, and my feet from falling, so that I may walk before God in the light of life.

169 The meaning of מָרּוֹם is difficult to assess. NRSV renders it as a vocative in light of אלהים in v. 2.
170 This line is difficult; NRSV reads כָּרָצִי ("weight out/recompense").
171 Or “By this I know.”
Psalm 56

2 111+1 V+Voc SD1 God
3 122 [SV] SD1 God
4 132 [PVV] SD1 God
5 134 [PV] SD2 God
6 134 [SVO] SD2 God
7 122 PV Overhearer
8 133 [SOV] Overhearer
9 133 R1 Overhearer
10 122 [PredP] God
11 133 [PV] SD4 Overhearer
12 134 [PredS+Voc] Overhearer
13 133 [VOP] God
14 133 [AV] Overhearer
15 133 [SPred] Overhearer
16 133 [PVO] Overhearer
17 134 [VSA] SD4 Overhearer
18 133 [AOP] SD9 God
19 122 [VOP] God
20 133 [VP] SD9 God
21 012 [Phr] SD9 God
Psalm 56 contains no textual difficulties that affect its surface structure; most of the lines are delineated within the constraints of zero to two clause predicators, one to four constituents, and one to four units per line. The majority of the lines contain one clause predicator, two to three constituents, and two to three units.

1. Clause predicators
   a) zero clause predicator: 1/34 lines
   b) one clause predicator: 27/34 lines
   c) two clause predicators: 6/34 lines

2. Constituents
   a) one constituent: 1/34 lines
   b) two constituents: 12/34 lines
   c) three constituents: 20/34 lines
   d) four constituents: 1/34 lines

3. Units
   a) two units: 9/34 lines
   b) three units: 22/34 lines
   c) four units: 3/34 lines

4. Vocatives: God (three occurrences)

Gross Structure

The poem has a well balance direction of address, alternating between the addressees. I divide this thirty-four-line poem into six paragraphs:

I. First paragraph (vv. 2-3; 5 lines)
1. Summons and petition (v. 2)

2. Reason for petition (v. 3)

II. Second paragraph (vv. 4-5; 5 lines): statements of confidence in God.

III. Third paragraph (vv. 6-7; 5 lines): complaints against enemies.

IV. Fourth paragraph (vv. 8-9; 5 lines)

1. Petition for enemy to be punished (v. 8)

2. Motivation to move God (v. 9)

V. Fifth paragraph (vv. 10-12; 8 lines): statements of confidence in God.

VI. Sixth paragraph (vv. 13-14; 6 lines): praise for prayer is heard.
Psalm 59

Deliver me from my enemies, O my God; protect me from those who rise up against me. Deliver me from those who work evil; from the bloodthirsty save me. Even now they lie in wait for my life; the mighty stir up strife against me. For no transgression or sin of mine, O LORD, for no fault of mine, they run and make ready. Rouse yourself, come to my help and see! You, LORD God of hosts, are God of Israel.

Awake to punish all the nations; spare none of those who treacherously plot evil. Selah Each evening they come back, howling like dogs and prowling about the city. There they are, bellowing with their mouths, with sharp words on their lips—for “Who,” they think, “will hear us?” But you laugh at them, O LORD; you hold all the nations in derision.

O my strength, I will watch for you; for you, O God, are my fortress. My God in his steadfast love will meet me; my God will let me look in triumph on my enemies. Do not kill them, or my people may forget; make them totter by your power, and bring them down, O Lord, our shield.

For the sin of their mouths, the words of their lips, let them be trapped in their pride. For the cursing and lies that they utter, consume them in wrath; consume them until they are no more. Then it will be known to the ends of the earth that God rules over Jacob.

172 Read as a single line “You, LORD of hosts, are God of Israel.” אֱלהִַ֥ים is omitted in favor of the divine name יְהוָָּֽה צְבָא וֹת.
173 I read this line as a nominal verbless clause “for God is my fortress,” in light of the following lines. The same for v.18b.
174 Lit. “Then it will be known that God rules over Jacob, to the ends of the earth.”
Each evening they come back, howling like dogs and prowling about the city.

They roam about for food, and growl if they do not get their fill.

But I will sing of your might; I will sing aloud of your steadfast love in the morning. For you have been a fortress for me and a refuge in the day of my distress.

O my strength, I will sing praises to you, for you, O God, are my fortress, the God who shows me steadfast love.
Psalm 59

122+1 VP+Voc SI1 God
122 PV SI1 God
123 VPhr SD1; SI2 God
123 PhrV SD1; SI2 God

[VO] SD1 God

133 VOS God

[PhrPhr+Voc] God

234 PhrVV God
233 VPV God

123+1 SPred+Voc God

134 VVO God
124 VPhr God

122 VP M3; R1 God
[VP] M3; R2 God

122 [VO] R3 God

123 VP God
122 [SV] God

122 SVP God
123 SVO+Voc God

133+1 SVO+Voc God
123 VP God

133 PPV Overhearers

122 [Spred] Overhearers
123 SV Overhearers

133 SVP Overhearers
133 V[VS] God
133 VPV God

012 Voc God

133 [PhrPhr] God

122 VP God

133 [PPV] God
122 VP God

133 [SVO] SD2 Overhearers

012 [Phr] SD2 Overhearers
וְיָשִּׁוּבֻּ לְעֶרֶב יֶהֱמַוּ כַכָֹּלֶב וִיסַ֥וֹבְבוּ עִּיר׃

הְֵ֭םָה יְנִועִ֣֯וּן לֶאֱכִֹ֑ל אִםֽלַ֥א יִ֝שְבְעֹּ֗וּ וַיָלִּינוּ׃

וַאֲנִִ֤י׀ אָשִּׁ֣יר עֺזֶ וַאֲרַמֵַ֥ן לַבֹֹּ֗קֶר חַַ֫סְדֶַ֥ךָ כִּיֽהָיִִּ֣יתָ מִשְגִָּּ֣ב לִִ֑י וּ֝מָנֹּ֗וֹס בְיִ֣וֹם צַרֽלִּי׃

עְֺּ֭זִי אֵלִֶּ֣יךָ אֲזַםִֵ֑רָה כִּיֽאֱלהִַ֥ים מִ֝שְגַּבִֹּ֗י אֱלהֵַ֥י חַסְדִּי׃

ָ֮ךָ וַאֲנִִ֤י׀ אָשִּׁ֣יר עֺזֶ
Psalm 59 contains no textual difficulties that affect its surface structure; most of the lines are delineated within the constraints of zero to two clause predicators, one to four constituents, and two to five units per line. The majority of the lines contain one clause predicator, two to three constituents, and two to three units.

1. Clause predicators
   a) zero clause predicator: 4/46 lines
   b) one clause predicator: 37/46 lines
   c) two clause predicators: 5/46 lines

2. Constituents
   a) one constituent: 2/46 lines
   b) two constituents: 27/46 lines
   c) three constituent: 16/46 lines
   d) four constituent: 1/46 lines

3. Units
   a) two units: 18/46 lines
   b) three units: 22/46 lines
   c) four units: 5/46 lines
   d) five units: 1/46

4. Vocatives:
   a) God: one occurrence
   b) Yhwh: two occurrences
   c) Lord: one occurrence
d) Yhwh God of hosts: one occurrence

Gross Structure: I divide this forty-six-line poem into seven paragraphs:

I. First paragraph (vv. 2-4; 7 lines)
   a) Summons and petition (v. 2)
   b) Reasons for petition (vv. 3-4)

II. Second paragraph (vv. 5-6; 5 lines): petition and motivation.

III. Third paragraph (vv. 7-8; 6 lines)
   1. Refrain: report of the enemies' activities (v. 7)
   2. Complaints against enemies (v. 8)

IV. Fourth paragraph (vv. 9-12; 9 lines)
   1. Statement of confidence (vv. 9-11)
   2. Petition for God to punish the enemies (v. 12)

V. Fifth paragraph (vv. 13-14; 7 lines)
   1. Complaints against the enemies (v. 13)
   2. Petition for God to punish the enemies (v. 14)

VI. Sixth paragraph (vv. 15-16; 5 lines)
   1. Refrain: report of the enemies' activities (v. 15)
   2. Complaints against enemies (v. 16)

VII. Seventh paragraph (vv. 17-18; 7 lines): praise
Psalm 61

1 Hear my cry, O God; listen to my prayer.
2 From the end of the earth I call to you when my heart is faint. Lead me to the rock that is higher than I;
3 for you are my refuge, a strong tower against the enemy.
4 Let me abide in your tent forever, find refuge under the shelter of your wings. Selah
5 For you, O God, have heard my vows; you have given me the heritage of those who fear your name.
6 Prolong the life of the king; may his years endure to all generations!
7 May he be enthroned forever before God; appoint steadfast love and faithfulness to watch over him!
8 So I will always sing praises to your name, as I pay my vows day after day.

175 Or in the jussive sense. “May you lead me,”
Psalm 61

The entire psalm is addressed to the Deity.
Psalm 61 contains no textual difficulties that affect its surface structure; most of the lines are delineated within the constraints of zero to two clause predicates, one to four constituents, and one to four units per line. The majority of the lines contain one clause predicate, two to three constituents, and two to three units.

1. Clause predicates
   a) zero clause predicate: 2/17 lines
   b) one clause predicate: 11/17 lines
   c) two clause predicates: 4/17 lines

2. Constituents
   a) one constituent: 1/17 lines
   b) two constituents: 7/17 lines
   c) three constituents: 6/17 lines
   d) four constituents: 3/17 lines

3. Units
   a) two units: 2/17 lines
   b) three units: 4/17 lines
   c) four units: 11/17 lines

4. Vocatives: God (two occurrences)

Gross Structure: I divide this seventeen-line poem into two main paragraphs:

I. First paragraph (vv. 2-5; 9 lines): summons and petition for help and protection

II. Second main paragraph (vv. 6-9; 8 lines): petition for the king and promise of praise.
Psalm 64

1 Hear my voice, O God, in my complaint; preserve my life from the dread enemy.
2 Hide me from the secret plots of the wicked, from the scheming of evildoers,
3 who whet their tongues like swords, who aim bitter words like arrows,
4 shooting from ambush at the blameless; they shoot suddenly and without fear.
5 They hold fast to their evil purpose; they talk of laying snares secretly, thinking,
6 Who can see us?
7 Who can search out our crimes?
8 We have thought out a cunningly conceived plot.”
9 For the human heart and mind are deep.
10 But God will shoot his arrow at them; they will be wounded suddenly.
11 Because of their tongue he will bring them to ruin; all who see them will shake with horror.
12 Then everyone will fear; they will tell what God has brought about, and ponder what he has done.
13 Let the righteous rejoice in the LORD and take refuge in him.
14 Let all the upright in heart glory.

176 Lit. “And they say;” this quotation marker is interpreted as prose.
177 Lit. “them.”
178 Or “They search out crimes.”
179 Or “They will bring him to ruin, their tongue being against them”
Psalm 64

23+1 VO+Voc God

133 PVO God

123 VPhr SD1;G1 God

013 [Phr] SD1;G1 God

134 [VPO] SD1; M1 God

134 [VPO] SD1; M1 God

134 [VPO] SD1; M1 God

234 AVV God

134 VOP God

133 VVO God

prose

God

God

God

Overhearers

Overhearers

Overhearers

Overhearers

Overhearers

Overhearers

Overhearers

Overhearers
Line Types: all the lines are delineated within the constraints of zero to two clause
predicators, one to four constituents, and two to four units per line. The majority of the
lines contain one clause predicator, two to three constituents, and two to three units.

1. Clause predicators
   a) zero clause predicator: 1/24 lines
   b) one clause predicator: 20/24 lines
   c) two clause predicators: 3/24 lines

2. Constituents:
   a) one constituent: 1/24 lines
   b) two constituents: 10/24 lines
   c) three constituents: 12/24 lines
   d) four constituents: 1/24 lines

3. Units
   a) two units: 5/24 lines
   b) three units: 12/24 lines
   c) four units: 7/24 lines

4. Vocatives: God (one occurrence)

Gross Structure: I divide this twenty-four-line poem into four paragraphs:

   I. First paragraph (vv. 2-3; 4 lines): summons and petition to seek protection.
   II. Second paragraph (vv. 4-7; 10 lines): complaint against the enemies.
   III. Third paragraph (vv. 8-9; 4 lines): God will punish the enemies.
   IV. Fourth paragraph (vv. 10-11; 6 lines): praise.
Psalm 69

1 Save me, O God, for the waters have come up to my neck.
2 I sink in deep mire, where there is no foothold;
I have come into deep waters, and the flood sweeps over me.
3 I am weary with my crying; my throat is parched.
My eyes grow dim with waiting for my God.
4 More in number than the hairs of my head are those who hate me without cause; many are those who would destroy me, my enemies who accuse me falsely.

What I did not steal must I now restore?
O God, you know my folly; the wrongs I have done are not hidden from you.

Do not let those who hope in you be put to shame because of me,
O Lord God of hosts;
do not let those who seek you be dishonored because of me,
O God of Israel.

It is for your sake that I have borne reproach, that shame has covered my face.
I have become a stranger to my kindred, an alien to my mother's children.
It is zeal for your house that has consumed me; the insults of those who insult you have fallen on me.

When I humbled my soul with fasting, they insulted me for doing so.
When I made sackcloth my clothing, I became a byword to them.
I am the subject of gossip for those who sit in the gate, and the drunkards make songs about me.

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180 Or “For the waters have come upon me.”
181 Or “I wept, with fasting my soul,” or “I made my soul mourn with fasting.”
182 Lit. “And the songs of the drunkards.”
But as for me, my prayer is to you, O LORD. At an acceptable time, O God, in the abundance of your steadfast love, answer me.

With your faithful help rescue me from sinking in the mire; let me be delivered from my enemies and from the deep waters.

Do not let the flood sweep over me, or the deep swallow me up, or the Pit close its mouth over me.

Answer me, O LORD, for your steadfast love is good; according to your abundant mercy, turn to me.

Do not hide your face from your servant, for I am in distress—make haste to answer me.

Draw near to me, redeem me, set me free because of my enemies.

You know the insults I receive, and my shame and dishonor; my foes are all known to you.

Insults have broken my heart, so that I am in despair. I looked for pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none.

They gave me poison for food, and for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.

Let their table be a trap for them, a snare for their allies.

Let their eyes be darkened so that they cannot see, and make their loins tremble continually.

Pour out your indignation upon them, and let your burning anger overtake them.
25 May their camp be a desolation; let no one live in their tents.
26 For they persecute those whom you have struck down, and those whom you have wounded, they attack still more.
27 Add guilt to their guilt; may they have no acquittal from you.
28 Let them be blotted out of the book of the living; let them not be enrolled among the righteous.
29 But I am lowly and in pain; let your salvation, O God, protect me.
30 I will praise the name of God with a song; I will magnify him with thanksgiving.
31 This will please the LORD more than an ox or a bull with horns and hoofs.
32 Let the oppressed see it and be glad; you who seek God, let your hearts revive.
33 For the LORD hears the needy, and does not despise his own that are in bonds.
34 Let heaven and earth praise him, the seas and everything that moves in them.
35 For God will save Zion and rebuild the cities of Judah; and his servants shall live there and possess it;
36 the children of his servants shall inherit it, and those who love his name shall live in it.

186 Lit. “And they tell of the pain of those whom you have wounded.”
187 Lit. “And may they not come into your righteousness.”
188 Or “Let your salvation set me securely on high.”
Psalm 69

111+ V+Voc SD1 God
133 [VSP] SD1 God
123 VP SD2 God
012 [Phr] SD2 God
123 VP God
122 SV God
244 VP[VS] SI1 God
244 VS[VP] SI1 God
135 VPS God
134 VS[Phr] God
234 OV[V] God
133 SVO+Voc God
133 SPV God
133 VPS M3 God
113 Voc M4 God
133 VPS M3 God
112 Voc M4 God
133 PVO God
133 SVO God
133 OVP SD4; G1 God
122 [OP] SD4; G1 God
123 [SV] SD4 God
134 [SVO] SD4 God
123 VPhr God
133 VPO M6 God
133 VPO M6 God
133 VPO M6 God
134 VOPhr God
013 Phr God
134 SVO SD5 God
012+1 [Phr+Voc] SD5 God
012+1 [Phr+Voc] SD6 God
123 VPhr SD6 God
233 VP[V] God
134 VP[Phr] God
123 VPhr God
122 VS God
144 VPSO God
133+1 V[PredS]+Voc God
134 PhrVO God
Atah yadu cheratiy v'bashiy v'klimatiy
Ahale shemaiyim b'shir
Kerah yishuv d'levfagom
Peketay ivriy veon: [God]

VOP
SPred[AV] [God]
VP[AV] [God]
PhrV [God]
SVO [God]
PredS [God]
SVO[AV] [God]
VPA [God]
PV [God]

VPO M8 [God]
PVO M8 [God]

VSPO SD7 [God]
SO SD7 [God]

VSP [God]
SAV [God]
OPV [God]
SV [God]

VSO [God]
PVS [God]

SO[VV] [God]
PhrV [God]

[SPred] [God]

SV+Voc [God]

Phr [Overhearers]

[VP] [Overhearers]

VP [Overhearers]

Phr [Overhearers]

[Phr] [Overhearers]

VS[V] [Overhearers]

VP+Voc [Overhearers]

SVO [Overhearers]

[OV] [Overhearers]

VS G3 [Overhearers]

[Phr] G3 [Overhearers]

SVO [Overhearers]

[VO] [Overhearers]

[SVO] [Overhearers]

[SPred] [Overhearers]
Line Types: all the lines are delineated within the constraints of zero to two clause predicators, one to four constituents, and two to five units per line. The majority of the lines contain one clause predicator, two to three constituents, and two to four units.

1. Clause predicators
   a) zero clause predicator: 5/82 lines
   b) one clause predicator: 63/82 lines
   c) two clause predicators: 14/82 lines

2. Constituents:
   a) one constituent: 5/82 lines
   b) two constituents: 30/82 lines
   c) three constituents: 40/82 lines
   d) four constituents: 7/82

3. Units
   a) two units: 12/82 lines
   b) three units: 49/82 lines
   c) four units: 19/82 lines
   d) five units: 2/82 lines

4. Vocatives
   a) God: four occurrences
   b) Lord Yhwh of hosts: one occurrences
   c) God of Israel: one occurrences
   d) Yhwh: two occurrences
Gross Structure

I divide this poem into eight paragraphs:

I. First paragraph (vv. 2-4; 8 lines): summons and petition for deliverance from deep water.

II. Second paragraph (vv. 5-7; 9 lines): complaint against the enemies, and hope for deliverance.

III. Third paragraph (vv. 8-13; 12 lines): complaints about current crisis.

IV. Fourth paragraph (vv. 14-16; 9 lines): petition for deliverance from deep water and enemies.

V. Fifth paragraph (vv. 17-19; 6 lines): summons and petition to seek deliverance.

VI. Sixth paragraph (vv. 20-22; 7 lines): complaint about suffering.

VII. Seventh paragraph (vv. 23-30a; 15 lines): curses against the enemies.

VIII. Eighth paragraph (vv. 30b-37; 16 lines): praise and confidence.
Psalm 70

Be pleased, O God, to deliver me.
O LORD, make haste to help me!

Let those be put to shame and confusion who seek my life.
Let those be turned back and brought to dishonor who desire to hurt me.

Let those who say, “Aha, Aha!” turn back because of their shame.
Let those who seek you rejoice and be glad in you.
Let those who love your salvation say evermore, “God is great!”

But I am poor and needy; hasten to me, O God!
You are my help and my deliverer;
O LORD, do not delay!

Lit.  Let them turn back because of their shame those who say, “Aha, Aha!”.
Lit.  Let them rejoice and be glad in you, all who seek you
Lit.  Let them say evermore, “God is great!” Those who love your salvation
Psalm 70

The entire poem is addressed to the Deity.
Line Types: all the lines are delineated into the constraints of zero to two clause predicates, one to four constituents, and two to five units per line. The majority of the lines contains one to two clause predicates, two to three constituents, and two to four units.

1. Clause predicates
   a) zero clause predicate: 2/16 lines
   b) one clause predicate: 7/16 lines
   c) two clause predicates: 7/16 lines

2. Constituents
   a) one constituent: 2/16 lines
   b) two constituents: 7/16 lines
   c) three constituents: 7/16 lines

3. Units
   a) two units: 6/16 lines
   b) three units: 8/16 lines
   c) four units: 2/16 lines

4. Vocatives:
   a) God: two occurrences
   b) Yhwh: two occurrences

Gross Structure: I divide this sixteen-line poem into two four paragraphs:

I. First paragraph (v. 2; 2 lines): summons and petition to seek help.

II. Second paragraph (vv. 3-4; 6 lines): curses against the enemies.
III. Third paragraph (v. 5; 4 lines) blessing for friends

IV. Fourth paragraph (v. 6; 4 lines): petition for help.
Psalm 86

1 Incline your ear, O LORD, and answer me, for I am poor and needy.

2 Preserve my life, for I am devoted to you; save your servant who trusts in you.

You are my God; be gracious to me, O Lord,

for to you do I cry all day long.

3 Gladden the soul of your servant, for to you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.

For you, O Lord, are good and forgiving, abounding in steadfast love to all who call on you.

4 Give ear, O LORD, to my prayer; listen to my cry of supplication.

In the day of my trouble I call on you, for you will answer me.

5 There is none like you among the gods, O Lord, nor are there any works like yours.

All the nations you have made shall come and bow down before you, O Lord, and shall glorify your name.

6 For you are great and do wondrous things; you alone are God.

Teach me your way, O LORD, that I may walk in your truth; give me an undivided heart to revere your name.

I give thanks to you, O Lord my God, with my whole heart, and I will glorify your name forever.

For great is your steadfast love toward me; you have delivered my soul from the depths of Sheol.

O God, the insolent rise up against me; a band of ruffians seeks my life, and they do not set you before them.

NRSV’s lineation for vv. 2b-3a is different from the MT. My lineation agrees with the MT and concurs with the NASB’s translation where the phrase אַתִּֽה אֱלהִַ֑י is taken as a vocative phrase:

Preserve my soul, for I am a godly man;
O You my God, save Your servant who trusts in You.
Be gracious to me, O Lord,
15 But you, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.

16 Turn to me and be gracious to me; give your strength to your servant; save the child of your serving girl.

17 Show me a sign of your favor, so that those who hate me may see it and be put to shame, because you, LORD, have helped me and comforted me.
The entire psalm is addressed to the Deity.
Line Types: all the lines are delineated into the constraints of zero to two clause predicates, one to four constituents, and two to four units per line. The majority of the lines contain one to two clause predicates, two to three constituents, and two to four units.

1. Clause predicates
   a) zero clause predicate: 2/40 lines
   b) one clause predicate: 23/40 lines
   c) two clause predicates: 15/40 lines

2. Constituents
   a) two constituents: 19/40 lines
   b) three constituents: 16/40 lines
   c) four constituents: 5/40 lines

3. Units
   a) two units: 10/40 lines
   b) three units: 15/40 lines
   c) four units: 14/40 lines
   d) five units: 1/40 lines

4. Vocatives:
   a) God: two occurrences
   b) Yhwh: three occurrences
   c) Lord: six occurrences

Gross Structure: I divide this forty-line poem into two three paragraphs:
I. First paragraph (vv. 1-7; 14 lines): summons and petition to seek mercy and protection.

II. Second paragraph (vv. 8-13; 15 lines): praise.

III. Third paragraph (vv. 14-17; 11 lines) complaint against the enemies and petition for deliverance.
Psalm 102

1 Hear my prayer, O LORD; let my cry come to you.
2 Do not hide your face from me in the day of my distress.
Incline your ear to me; answer me speedily in the day when I call.
3 For my days pass away like smoke, and my bones burn like a furnace.
4 My heart is stricken and withered like grass; I am too wasted to eat my bread.
5 Because of my loud groaning my bones cling to my skin.
6 I am like an owl of the wilderness, like a little owl of the waste places.
7 I lie awake; I am like a lonely bird on the housetop.
8 All day long my enemies taunt me; those who deride me use my name for a curse.
9 For I eat ashes like bread, and mingle tears with my drink, because of your indignation and anger;
for you have lifted me up and thrown me aside.
10 My days are like an evening shadow; I wither away like grass.
11 But you, O LORD, are enthroned forever; your name endures to all generations.
12 You will rise up and have compassion on Zion, for it is time to favor it; the appointed time has come.
13 For your servants hold its stones dear, and have pity on its dust.

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193 Lit. “I forget to eat my food.”
194 The editors of the BHS suggests that a verb has probable omitted in this line therefore the 3+3 meter is corrupted. I retain the MT.
195 Lit. “My bone clings to my skin.”
196 Lit. “those who deride me have sworn by me.”
The nations will fear the name of the LORD, and all the kings of the earth your glory.

For the LORD will build up Zion; he will appear in his glory.

He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and will not despise their prayer.

Let this be recorded for a generation to come, so that a people yet unborn may praise the LORD:

that he looked down from his holy height, from heaven the LORD looked at the earth, to hear the groans of the prisoners, to set free those who were doomed to die;

so that the name of the LORD may be declared in Zion, and his praise in Jerusalem, when peoples gather together, and kingdoms, to worship the LORD.

He has broken my strength in midcourse; he has shortened my days.

―O my God,‖ I say, ―do not take me away at the midpoint of my life, you whose years endure throughout all generations.‖

Long ago you laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands.

They will perish, but you endure; they will all wear out like a garment.

You change them like clothing, and they pass away;

but you are the same, and your years have no end.

The children of your servants shall live secure; their offspring shall be established in your presence.
Psalm 102

1. יְְָ֭הוָה שִׁמְעִָּ֣ה תְפִלָתִִ֑י
2. וְ֝שַׁוְעָתִֹּ֗י אֵלֶַ֥יךָ תָבּוֹא׃
3. אַלֽתַסְתֵ֬ר פָנֶַ֨יךָ מִמֶּ֣ם בְ֝יֵ֪וֹם צַַ֫ר לִַ֥י
4. הַטֵּהֽאֵלַַ֥י אָזְנִֶ֑ךָ בְ֣יַ֥וֹם אֶ֝קְרָֹּ֗א מַהֵַ֥ר עֲנֵּנִי׃
5. כִּיֽכָלִּ֣וּ בְעָשִָּׁ֣ן יָמִָ֑י
6. הוּכָּ֭עֵשֶב וַיִבִַּ֣שׁ לִבִִ֑י כִּּ֣שָׁ֝כַֹּ֗חְתִי מֵאֲכַ֥ל לַחְמִי׃
7. מִקַ֥וֹל אַנְחָתִִ֑י דָבְ֥קַָ֥ה עַ֝צְמִֹּ֗י לִבְשָרִּי׃
8. דָּמִיתִי לִקְאִַּ֣ת מִדְבִָ֑ר הָ֝יִֹּ֗יתִי כְכִֵ֣וֹס חֳרָבּוֹת׃
9. שָׁקַַ֥דְתִי וָאֶּהְיִֶ֑ה כְ֝צִפֹּ֗וֹר בוֹדֵַ֥ד עַלֽגָּּג׃
10. כָֽלְַ֭יוֹם חֵרְפִּ֣וּנִי אוֹיְבִָ֑י כָּֽהְַ֭יוֹם חֵרְפִּ֣וּנִי אוֹיְבִָ֑י
11. כִּיֽאְֵ֭פֶר כַלִֶּ֣חֶם אָכִָ֑לְתִי בְּכִַ֥י מָסָּכְתִי׃
12. מִפְּנֵּיֽזַּעַמְךַָ֥י וְקִצְפֶּ֞י כִּי נְ֝שָאתַֹּ֗נִי וַתַשְׁלִיכֵּנִי׃
13. יְָּ֭מַי כְצִֵּ֣ל נָטִ֑וּי וַ֝אֲנִֹּ֗י כָעֵַ֥שֶב אִיבָּשׁ׃
14. וְאַתִָּ֣ה יְְּ֭הוָה לְעוֹלִָּ֣ם תֵשִֵׁ֑ב וְ֝זִכְרְךָֹּ֗ל לְדִֹּ֣ור וָדֹּר׃
15. אַתִָּ֣ה תָָ֭קֻוָּם תְרַחִֵּ֣ם צִיִ֑וֹן כִּיֽעֵַ֥ת לְ֝חֶּּֽנְנָֹּ֗הּ כִֽיֽבַָ֥א מוֹעֵּד׃
16. כִּיֽרָצִּ֣וּ עְֲּ֭בָדֶיךָ אֶתֽאֲבָנִֶ֑יהָ וְּאֶתֽעֲפָרַָ֥הּ יְחֹנֵּנוּ׃
17. וְיִּירְאִּ֣וּ גְּ֭וֹיִם אֶתֽשִֵּׁ֣ם יְהוִָ֑ה וְכָּלֽמַלְכֵַ֥י הָ֝אָֹּ֗רֶץ אֶתֽכְבוֹדֶּךָ׃
18. כִּיֽבָנִָּ֣ה יְהוִָּ֣ה צִיִ֑וֹן נִ֝רְאָֹּ֗ה בְִכְבוֹדֹו׃
19. פְָּ֭נָה אֶלֽתְפִלִַּ֣ת הָעַרְעִָ֑ר וְלּאֽבָ֝זָֹּ֗ה אֶתֽתְפִלָתָּם׃
20. תִכִָּ֣תֶב זְֹ֭את לְדִּ֣וֹר אַחֲרִ֑וֹן וְַ֥ם נִ֝בְרָֹּ֗א יְהַלֶלֽיָּהּ׃
כִּיֽהְִּ֭שְׁקִיף מִםְרִ֞וֹם קָדְשִׁ֑וֹ יְ֝הוָֹ֗ה מִשָּ֞מִיֵּֽלֶ֬רֶץ הִבִּיט׃
לְִ֭שְׁמֹעַ אֶנְקִַּ֣ת אָסִִ֑יר לְ֝פַתֵֹּ֗חַ בְֵּ֣נוֹת תְמוּתָּה׃
לְּסַפִֵּ֣ר בְְ֭צִיוֹן שִֵּׁ֣ם יְהוִָ֑ה וּ֝תְהִלָתֹּ֗וֹ בִירוּשָׁלִָּם׃
בְּהִקָבִֵּ֣ץ עַםִִּ֣ים יַחְדִָ֑ו וּ֝מַמְלָכֹּ֗וֹ לַעֲבַ֥ד אֶתֽיְהוָּה׃
עִמֵָ֖ה בַדֶַ֥רֶךְ כֹחִֹּֽ֗֯וֹ קִצַַ֥ר יָמָּי׃
אֹמַֹ֗ר אֵלִֹ֗י אַּלֽתְַ֭עֲלֵנִי בַחֲצִִּ֣י יָמִָ֑י בְדֵ֖וֹר דוֹרִִּ֣ים שְׁנוֹתֶּיךָ׃
לְְּ֭פָנִים הָאִָּ֣רֶץ יָסִַ֑דְתָ וּּמַעֲשֵֵ֖ה יָדִֶּ֣יךָ שָׁמָּיִם׃
הִֵ֤םָה׀ יֹאבֵדוָָ֮ וְאַתֵּ֭֬ה תַַ֫עֲמַֹ֥ד וְְ֭כֺלָם כַבִֶּ֣גֶד יִבְלִ֑וּ כַלְבֵ֖וּשׁ תַחֲלִיפִֵּ֣ם וְיַחֲלַ֨פוּ׃
וְאַתָּ֞הִוּא וּ֝שְׁנוֹתֶֹּ֗יךָ לִּ֣א יִתָּםוּ׃
וּבְנֵּיֽעֲבָדֶַ֥יךָ יִשְׁכִ֑וֹנָּו וְ֝זַרְעָֹּ֗ם לְפָנֶַ֥יךָ יִכּוֹן׃

Overhearers

Yhwh
Line Types: all the lines are delineated within zero to two clause predicates, one to four constituents, and two to five units per line. The majority of the lines contain one clause predicate, two to three constituents, and two to four units.

1. Clause predicates:
   a) zero clause predicate: 4/58 lines
   b) one clause predicate: 45/58 lines
   c) two clause predicates: 9/58 lines

2. Constituents
   a) one constituent: 1/58 lines
   b) two constituents: 22/58 lines
   c) three constituents: 28/58 lines
   d) four constituents: 7/58 lines

3. Units
   a) two units: 10/58 lines
   b) three units: 33/58 lines
   c) four units: 14/58 lines
   d) five units: 1/58 lines

4. Vocatives:
   a) Yhwh: two occurrences
   b) God: one occurrence

Gross Structure

I divide this fifty-eight-line poem into three main paragraphs:
I. First paragraph (vv. 2-12; 23 lines): this paragraph opens with the summons and general petition for favorable hearing. The main focus is the complaints: complaints about the suffering, complaint against the enemies, and complaint against the Deity.

   a) summons, petition to seek favorable hearing (vv. 2-3).
   b) complaint about the enduring suffering (vv. 4-8).
   c) complaint against the Deity (vv. 11-12)

II. Second paragraph (vv. 13-23; 22 lines): this paragraph contains praise and petition elements. The main focus of the paragraph is Zion.

   a) petition to seek rebuilding of Zion (vv. 13-17)
   b) motivations and praise (vv. 18-23).

III. Third paragraph (vv. 24-29; 13 lines): this paragraph contains complaint, petition, and praise motifs.

   a) complaint about peril of life (v. 24)
   b) petition for life to be spared (v. 25)
   c) praise (vv. 26-28)
   d) wishes for the survival of the descendants (v. 29)
Deliver me, O LORD, from evildoers; protect me from those who are violent, who plan evil things in their minds and stir up wars continually.

They make their tongue sharp as a snake's, and under their lips is the venom of vipers. Selah

Guard me, O LORD, from the hands of the wicked; protect me from the violent who have planned my downfall.

The arrogant have hidden a trap for me, and with cords they have spread a net, along the road they have set snares for me. Selah

I say to the LORD, “You are my God; give ear, O LORD, to the voice of my supplications.”

O LORD, my Lord, my strong deliverer, you have covered my head in the day of battle.

Do not grant, O LORD, the desires of the wicked; do not further their evil plot. Selah

Those who surround me lift up their heads; let the mischief of their lips overwhelm them! Let burning coals fall on them! Let them be flung into pits, no more to rise.

Do not let the slanderer be established in the land; let evil speedily hunt down the violent! I know that the LORD maintains the cause of the needy, and executes justice for the poor.

Surely the righteous shall give thanks to your name; the upright shall live in your presence.

201 NASB: “Who have purposed to trip up my feet.”
202 I interperate the direct quotation phrase אָמִַּ֣רְתִי לְַ֭יהוָה as prose: I say to the LORD, “You are my God; give ear, O LORD, to the voice of my supplications.”
203 Qere וּיָםִַ֥֯יּ (may they waiver); but it might be best to read it in light of the LXX πεσοῦνται (they will fall). I scan v. 11 in accord with the NASB: May burning coals fall upon them; May they be cast into the fire, Into deep pits from which they cannot rise.
Psalm 140

1. A psalm of David.

3. My foes have set a Trap for me,
   And my enemies have spoken evil.
   They have set a trap for my life:
   My God, rescue me!

4. They have set traps for my path.
   The whole day they are saying evil things.

5. They have prepared a Gorge and a Pit for me,
   And they have said, 'We will swallow him up alive.'

6. My God, rescue me from men of violence.
   My God, rescue me from the power of evil men.

7. I called to the Lord, who answered me.
   My God, rescue me.

8. The Lord is a stronghold for the oppressed,
   A stronghold in times of trouble.

9. And those who know me will come.
   They will come and share my salvation.

10. The Lord God is strong and glorious.
    He has saved me from those who pursue me.

11. My God, rescue me from men of violence.
    My God, rescue me from the power of evil men.

12. My God, rescue me from men of violence.
    My God, rescue me from the power of evil men.

13. My God, rescue me from men of violence.
    My God, rescue me from the power of evil men.

14. My God, rescue me from men of violence.
    My God, rescue me from the power of evil men.

15. My God, rescue me from men of violence.
    My God, rescue me from the power of evil men.
Line Types: all the lines are delineated into the constraints of zero to two clause predicates, one to four constituents, and two to five units per line. The majority of the lines contain one clause predicate, two to three constituents, and two to five units.

1. Clause predicates:
   
   d) zero clause predicate: 5/29 lines
   e) one clause predictor: 18/29 lines
   f) two clause predicates: 6/29 lines

2. Constituents
   
   e) one constituent: 4/29 lines
   f) two constituents: 9/29 lines
   g) three constituents: 14/29 lines
   h) four constituents: 2/29 lines

3. Units
   
   e) two units: 5/29 lines
   f) three units: 7/29 lines
   g) four units: 14/29 lines
   h) five units: 3/29 lines

4. Vocatives:
   
   c) Yhwh: four occurrences
   d) Yhwh my Lord the strength of salvation: one occurrence

Gross Structure

I divide this twenty-nine-line poem into five paragraphs:
I. First paragraph (vv. 2-4; 6 lines):
   d) summons, petition to seek protection (v. 2)
   e) complaint against the enemies (v. 3)

II. Second paragraph (vv. 5-6; 6 lines)
   c) petition to seek protection (v. 4)
   d) complaint against the enemies.

III. Third paragraph (vv. 7-9; 6 lines)
   e) summons and petition for prayer be heard (vv. 7-8)
   f) petition against the enemies (v. 8)

IV. Fourth paragraph (vv. 10-12; 7 lines): curses against the enemies

IV. Fifth paragraph (vv. 13-14; 4 lines)
   a) statements of confidence (v. 13)
   b) praise (v. 14)
Psalm 141

1 I call upon you, O LORD; come quickly to me; give ear to my voice when I call to you.

2 Let my prayer be counted as incense before you, and the lifting up of my hands as an evening sacrifice.

3 Set a guard over my mouth, O LORD; keep watch over the door of my lips.

4 Do not turn my heart to any evil, to busy myself with wicked deeds in company with those who work iniquity; do not let me eat of their delicacies.

5 Let the righteous strike me; let the faithful correct me.

6 Never let the oil of the wicked anoint my head, for my prayer is continually against their wicked deeds.

7 Like a rock that one breaks apart and shatters on the land, so shall their bones be strewn at the mouth of Sheol.

8 But my eyes are turned toward you, O God, my Lord; in you I seek refuge; do not leave me defenseless.

9 Keep me from the trap that they have laid for me, and from the snares of evildoers.

10 Let the wicked fall into their own nets, while I alone escape.

My lineation for this psalm agrees with the NRSV.
Psalm 141

The entire poem is addressed to the Deity.
Line Types: all the lines are delineated into the constraints of zero to three clause
predicators, two to four constituents, and two to five units per line. The majority of the
lines contain one clause to two predicators, two to three constituents, and three to four
units.

1. Clause predicators
   a) zero clause predictor: 3/24 lines
   b) one clause predictor: 14/24 lines
   c) two clause predictors: 6/24 lines
   d) three clause predictor: 1/24 lines

2. Constituents
   a) two constituents: 8/24 lines
   b) three constituents: 15/24 lines
   c) four constituents: 1/24 lines

3. Units
   a) two units: 2/24 lines
   b) three units: 9/24 lines
   c) four units: 12/24 lines
   d) five units: 1/24 lines

4. Vocatives: Yhwh (three occurrences)

Gross Structure: I divide this twenty-four-line poem into four paragraphs:

I. First paragraph (vv. 1-2; 4 lines): summons and petition to seek favorable hearing.

II. Second main paragraph (vv. 3-4; 6 lines): petition to seek obedience to a godly
life.

III. Third paragraph (vv. 5-7; 8 lines): imprecation/complaint.

IV. Fourth paragraph (vv. 9-10; 6 lines): petition to seek protection and enemies to be punished.
Psalm 143  
1 Hear my prayer, O LORD; give ear to my supplications in your faithfulness; answer me in your righteousness.
2 Do not enter into judgment with your servant, for no one living is righteous before you.
3 For the enemy has pursued me, crushing my life to the ground, making me sit in darkness like those long dead.
4 Therefore my spirit faints within me; my heart within me is appalled.
5 I remember the days of old, I think about all your deeds, I meditate on the works of your hands.
6 I stretch out my hands to you; my soul thirsts for you like a parched land. Selah
7 Answer me quickly, O LORD; my spirit fails.
8 Do not hide your face from me, or I shall be like those who go down to the Pit.
9 Let me hear of your steadfast love in the morning, for in you I put my trust.
10 Teach me the way I should go, for to you I lift up my soul.
11 Save me, O LORD, from my enemies; I have fled to you for refuge.
12 Teach me to do your will, for you are my God.
13 Let your good spirit lead me on a level path.
14 For your name's sake, O LORD, preserve my life. In your righteousness bring me out of trouble.
15 In your steadfast love cut off my enemies, and destroy all my adversaries, for I am your servant.

205 My lineation agrees with NRSV.
Psalm 143:1

The entire poem is addressed to the Deity.
Line Types: all the lines are delineated into the constraints of zero to two clause predicators, one to four constituents, and one to four units per line. The majority of the lines contain one clause predicator, two to three constituents, and two to three units.

1. Clause predicators
   a) zero clause predicator: 2/34 lines
   b) one clause predicator: 27/34 lines
   c) two clause predicators: 5/34 lines

2. Constituents
   a) one constituent: 1/34 lines
   b) two constituents: 11/34 lines
   c) three constituents: 21/34 lines
   d) four constituents: 1/34

3. Units
   a) two units: 7/34 lines
   b) three units: 22/34 lines
   c) four units: 5/34 lines

4. Vocatives: Yhwh (four occurrences)

Gross Structure

I divide this thirty-four-line poem into two six paragraphs;

I. First main paragraph (vv. 1-2; 5 lines): summons and petition to seek favorable hearing.
II. Second paragraph (vv. 3-4; 6 lines) complaint about the suffering caused by the enemies.

III. Third paragraph (vv. 5-6; 5 lines) expressions of piety.

IV. Fourth paragraph (vv. 7-8; 8 lines) petition for divine intervention and statement of piety.

V. Fifth paragraph (vv. 9-10; 5 lines) petition for deliverance and statement of piety.

VI. Sixth paragraph (vv. 11-12; 5 lines) petition for deliverance from the enemies.
The corpus of the twenty psalms under study consists of 737 lines. All of the lines conformed to the constraints of Syntactic Description; each contains zero to two clause predicators, one to four constituents, and two to five units per line. The majority of the lines, however, each contains one to two clause predicators, two to three constituents, and two to four units. The below data will be analyzed and compared to other Individual Laments in the next chapter.

1. Clause predicators:
   a) zero clause predicator: 63/737 lines (9%)
   b) one clause predicator: 534/737 lines (72%)
   c) two clause predicators: 134/737 lines (18%)
   d) three clause predicators: 6/737 lines (1%)

2. Constituents
   a) one constituent: 29/737 lines (4%)
   b) two constituents: 329/737 lines (45%)
   c) three constituents: 339/737 lines (46%)
   d) four constituents: 40/737 lines (5%)

3. Units
   a) two units: 187/737 lines (25%)
   b) three units: 377/737 lines (52%)
   c) four units: 158/737 lines (21%)
   d) five units: 15/737 lines (2%)
Chapter Three

Poetic Descriptions of the Twenty Individual Laments

3.0 Introduction

The present chapter will assess the poetic descriptions of the twenty Individual Laments previously analyzed in Chapter Two. This chapter will have two parts, each with its own focus.

The first part of the chapter will focus on three tasks. The first task will be to select a set of uniform sample texts from the twenty psalms for the classification of syntactic structures of the lines. In order to select the best representative texts, I will identify and eliminate those psalms commonly recognized as having distinctive literary forms and contents that set them apart from the rest of the psalms under study. Subsequently, I will group the remaining psalms into smaller groups in accord with their commonalities in content and modes of speeches other than the identified commonalities in the opening lines.

The second task will be to present the findings of the syntactic constraints of the lines. This exercise will serve several purposes:

1. To examine the overall syntactic constraints of the lines in individual psalms(s) and groups of psalms in my corpus of texts
2. To verify HVS’s claims concerning the syntactic constraints in biblical Hebrew verse
3. To examine the overall distributions of the line constraints of the psalms under study, and subsequently, point out why Syntactic Description can be
expanded and used as an effective exegetical tool in structural analysis and
genre consideration and classification.

The third task will be to classify and define the line types in accord with their
syntactic structures and frequencies. The defined line types will serve as the basis for
determining the regularities and irregularities of certain types of syntactic structures of
the lines in a given psalm or group of psalms. The purpose of this exercise will be to
describe, syntactically, the poetic descriptions of each individual psalm and groups of
psalms under study.

The second part of the chapter will focus on issues related to genre consideration.
The first discussion will engage recent studies and suggestions that are deemed important
to the genre reclassification of the Individual Laments. The second discussion will
compare, in light of the findings in the first part of the present chapter, the structures of
the psalms under study to the other representative Individual Laments in the Psalter and
suggest different genre classification.
3.1.1 Initial Grouping of the Twenty Psalms: The Best Representative Sample Texts

As already stated on the preceding page, in order to select a uniform sample of texts for the analyses, the initial task is to identify and eliminate those psalms commonly recognized as having distinctive literary forms and contents that set them apart from the rest of the psalms in the group of twenty under study. In my corpus of texts, eight psalms fit such criteria; the difficulties in the determination of their genres are readily apparent in the commentaries: Psalms 26, 43, 51, 61, 70, 102, 140, and 143.

Psalm 26: This psalm might be best described as a psalm of Protesting Innocence and Plea for Justice. Gunkel has classified Psalm 26 along with Psalms 5, 7, and 17, as a Psalm of Protesting Innocence, a sub-group of the Individual Lament genre. However, unlike Psalms 5, 7, 17, and the majority of the psalms in my corpus of texts, Psalm 26 contains no lament motifs and makes no mention of the enemies.

Psalm 43: As attested by several MSS, the majority of scholars agreed on the reading Psalms 42 and 43 as a single composition, with Psalm 43 being the ending of Psalm 42. It is fruitless to repeat scholars’ comments regarding the unity of these two psalms, for the consensus among them in this regard is readily apparent in the commentaries.

Psalm 51: The early church tradition includes Psalm 51 as one of the seven penitential psalms (Psalms 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, and 143). Gunkel has appropriately placed Psalm 51 in a sub-class, i.e., the Psalms of Confession; this psalm contains the confession of a person who was in agonizing pain, having the self-awareness of the sinful condition. Unlike the rest of the twenty psalms under study, this psalm concentrates on
the motifs of sins and forgiveness; it contains neither petitions for deliverance from the
enemies, nor oppression by the enemies' motifs. Referring to the structure of this psalm,
Tate writes, “The characteristic features as complaint about enemies and prayer for their
defeat and/or punishment is missing, as well as any protestation of innocence on the part
of the speaker in the psalm.”

Weiser comments, “there is no evidence of a
homogeneous construction of the strophes; it would hardly accord with the tremendous
spiritual tension with which the prayer is imbued.”

Psalm 61: There is no consensus among scholars concerning the genre of this
psalm. Referring to Psalm 61, Weiser suggests calling it a Thanksgiving Song; but for
Broyles, it is a prayer for safe pilgrimage. Yet according to Dahood, Psalm 61 is a
prayer of a king; however, Tate interprets this psalm as a prayer of a messianic hope.
In contrast to the rest of the psalms under study, Psalms 61 contains the petition for the
king; it lacks also the complaint about enemies and petitions for their punishment.

Psalm 70: This psalm is not a good representative text because the vocative-
 imperative construction in the opening line requires textual emendation. In addition, this
psalm might be a rework/copy of Ps 40:13-17.

Psalm 102: Like Psalm 43, this psalm contains the motif of complaint against the
Deity. Noting the mixed motifs this psalm contains, Gerstenberger states, “the main
problem of Psalm 102 is the juncture on individual and communal elements, the latter

206 Tate, Psalms, 8.
207 Weiser, Psalms, 401.
208 Weiser, Psalms, 442.
209 Broyles, Psalms, 254.
210 Dahood, Psalms II, 83; Tate, Psalms, 113.
tending to the hymnic side."\textsuperscript{211} Perhaps the questions asked by Allen will point out the difficulties concerning the form and content of this psalm:

Bewildering multiplicities of interpretations have been offered for this complex psalm. Exegetical ambiguities have been exploited to the full and intertwined with variety of views as to form and setting. Is the psalm an individual complaint? Is it cultic in origin? Does the psalmist speak as representative of the community and if so is he a king? Is the psalm a single unit? Has it been interpreted with the supplementary material? Does the psalm assume the destruction of Zion (vv. 15, 17)? What kind of divine intervention is envisaged in v. 14?\textsuperscript{212}

Psalm 140: Like Psalm 102, this psalm exhibits both individual and communal motifs.\textsuperscript{213} In addition to a lengthy report speech in vv. 7-12, the complex structure of this psalm is apparent through Gerstenberger's comments on vv. 7-8: “Did the text get mixed up or turned around during transmission? Have two psalm fragments been glued together, and we are really dealing with two separate units?”\textsuperscript{214}

Psalm 143: Briggs suggests calling this psalm a communal prayer.\textsuperscript{215} Dahood, as also Eaton, regarded this psalm as a royal psalm in light of the superscription and the motif of the term “servant” in the last line of the poem.\textsuperscript{216} Due to the difficulty in genre determination, this psalm would not serve as a good representative sample text.

After having eliminated the above eight psalms, twelve psalms remain in my corpus of texts: Psalms 5, 17, 35, 54, 55, 56, 57, 59, 64, 69, 86, and 141. I divide these psalms into two groups, A and B. The A group includes Psalms 54, 55, 56, 57, 59, 64,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{211} Gerstenberger, \textit{Psalms II}, 211.
\item \textsuperscript{213} Broyles, \textit{Psalms}, 489.
\item \textsuperscript{214} Gerstenberger, \textit{Psalms II}, 409.
\item \textsuperscript{215} Briggs and Briggs, \textit{Psalms}, 514.
\item \textsuperscript{216} Dahood, \textit{Psalms III}, 322; Eaton, \textit{Kingship}, 64.
\end{itemize}
and 69; these seven psalms begin with the vocative Elohim in the opening lines and contain shifts in direction of address. The B group includes Psalms 5, 17, 35, 86, and 141; these five psalms begin with the vocative Yhwh in the opening lines and contain no change in direction of address.

3.1.2 The Syntactic Constraints of the Lines and Their Distributions

Assessing the syntactic descriptions of the twenty psalms previously analyzed in Chapter Two, using the case of one-clause-predicator lines as an example, my corpus of the twenty psalms consists of 531 one-clause-predicator lines out of the total 737 lines, 72%. Compare this figure to the 71% of the HVS's corpora of texts; the two ratios are almost equal. The 72% is a representative figure for one-clause-predicator lines in 737 poetic lines of the twenty psalms as a single corpus of text, just as 71% is for 1,200 lines of HVS's corpora of texts (850/1,200).  

However, it should be made clear that the 72% figure is not the comparable range of one-clause-predicator lines representing every individual psalm in my corpus of texts. Likewise, the 71% is not a representative figure for every individual text in the case of HVS. The reason is that the sample psalms contain uneven distributions of various types of constraints.  

The uneven distribution tendency will skew the result even more significantly if the body of sample texts is a collection of various corpora of texts consisting of different

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217 O'Connor, HVS, 321.
218 For example, 35% of the lines in Psalm 70 are one-clause-predicator lines compared to 72% of the 737 lines. A large gap of 32% difference resulted from uneven distributions.
textual traditions that contain different syntactic descriptions, as in the case of HVS.\footnote{The 1,200 lines analyzed in HVS came from various corpora of texts: 453 lines came from the Pentateuch (Genesis 49, Deuteronomy 32, Deuteronomy 33, Exodus 15, and Numbers 23-24), 414 lines from the Prophets (Judge 5, 2 Samuel 1, Habakkuk 3, and the Book of Zephaniah), and 358 lines from the Psalter (Psalms 78, 106, and 107). Close examination revealed that Zephaniah 1-3 has different poetic description from Psalms 78, 106, and 107. O'Connor, HVS, 164.}

Unless the collection of the sample texts exhibits some comparable uniformity in syntactic patterns, such ratios/results cannot serve as the basis for any meaningful comparison. Yet it is the variations/dissimilarities and the commonalities in the syntactic structures of the lines within and between the two groups of psalms which I hope to identify so that comparisons might be possible.

3.1.3 The Structures of the Lines and Line Types of the Twenty Psalms

As analyzed in Chapter Two, the 737 lines of the twenty psalms of my corpus of texts appear in twenty-eight different line structures.\footnote{The syntactic constraints of the lines of the twenty psalms are the same as HVS's matrix; numerically it accounts for sixty-four combinations but due to the syntactic constraints, only thirty-five combinations are possible. My corpus of texts has twenty-eight different line structures out of the possible thirty-five. For detailed explanations, see O'Connor, HVS, 315-16.} I will classify these twenty-eight line structures in accord with the rates of occurrence, starting with the most regular and ending with the least (cf. Table 3.1.3 on the next page). Type I will be the most regular, i.e., highest rate of occurrence. The second to the highest rate of occurrence will be Type II. The third most regular lines will be Type III; and the least regular lines will be Type IV.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type I</th>
<th>123 (1 clause-2 constituents- 3 units)</th>
<th>133 (1 clause- 3 constituents- 3 units)</th>
<th>122 (1 clause-2 constituents- 2 units)</th>
<th>Total lines in Type I = 412 lines/737 lines (56%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type II</td>
<td>134 (1 clause-3 constituents- 4 units)</td>
<td>233 (2 clauses-3 constituents- 3 units)</td>
<td>124 (1 clause-2 constituents- 4 units)</td>
<td>244 (2 clauses-4 constituents- 4 units)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type III</td>
<td>022 (0 clause- 2 constituents- 2 units)</td>
<td>222 (2 clauses- 2 constituents- 2 units)</td>
<td>012 (0 clause- 1 constituent- 2 units)</td>
<td>013 (0 clause- 1 constituents- 3 units)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type IV</td>
<td>014 (0 clause- 1 constituents- 4 units)</td>
<td>135 (1 clause- 3 constituents- 5 units)</td>
<td>235 (2 clauses- 3 constituents- 5 units)</td>
<td>245 (2 clauses- 4 constituents- 5 units)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As illustrated above, Type I lines in my corpus of texts includes 412 lines (56%); Type II includes 217 lines (29%); Type III includes 72 lines (10%); and Type IV includes 36 lines (5%). One notes that this line typology is similar to that of HVS, the combinations that made up the line types are almost the same.²²¹ Again, the same arithmetic principle shown in the previous section also applies to these tabulations; the results shown in above list for my corpus of texts do not represent the actual numerical ranges of the four line types and their rates of occurrences for each individual psalm due to uneven distributions of data. However, what has been confirmed is significant; the results of the combined 737 lines and the 1,200 lines of biblical Hebrew verse have shown that the order of regularity of the four line types is accurate, i.e., Type I is the most regular, Type II is the second most and so on.

Yet however representative the findings might be with respect to the regularities of certain types of syntactic structures of the lines of the biblical Hebrew verse, the findings do not exemplify the syntactic description of individual psalms of the sample texts. The results are generic due to uneven distributions of the rates of occurrences of the line types (the same applied to the individual texts of the HVS). Again, it is the disparity and parity in the structures of the lines and their rates of occurrence within and between the twenty psalms that are crucial supporting arguments that I hope to identify in the next step, so that the literary forms of a psalm or group(s) of psalms might be syntactically characterized.

²²¹ The percentile ratios of the four line types in my corpus of texts are roughly equal to that of the 1,200 lines analyzed in HVS (56%, 29%, 10%, and 5% compared to HVS's 63%, 20%, 12%, and 5% for Type I-IV respectively); O'Connor, *HVS*, 319-20.
In the preceding, I have presented the line types representing all twenty psalms, i.e., the entire corpus of texts. What will be presented in table T.3.1.3A below are the lines types and their rates of occurrences of each individual psalm in the A group (Psalms 54, 55, 56, 57, 59, 64, and 69; these psalms contain shifts in direction of address).

Similarly, table T.3.1.3B will present the four line types of the psalms in the B group (Psalms 5, 17, 35, 86, and 141; these psalms contain no shift in direction of address).

A few remarks should be made concerning the reading of the numerical figures presented in the following tables. Table T.3.1.3A below shows that the fifteen-line Psalm 54 includes two lines having 122 line structure (122 represents one clause predicater/ two constituents/ two units line structure), five lines having 123 line structure, and five lines having 133 line structure. The percentile ratios of 122-line type over the total lines of the poem is 13% (2/15), and 123-line type is 33% (5/15), and of 133-line type is 33% (5/15). Adding these three ratios gives 79% rate of occurrence of Type I lines in Psalm 54.
Table 3.1.3A

The four line types of group A: Psalms 54, 55, 56, 57, 59, 64, and 69
(these psalms contain shifts in directions of addresses)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>T.3.1.3A</th>
<th>Psalm 54</th>
<th>Psalm 55</th>
<th>Psalm 56</th>
<th>Psalm 57</th>
<th>Psalm 59</th>
<th>Psalm 64</th>
<th>Psalm 69</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Length of poem</td>
<td>15 lines</td>
<td>58 lines</td>
<td>34 lines</td>
<td>30 lines</td>
<td>46 lines</td>
<td>24 lines</td>
<td>80 lines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type I</td>
<td>Most regular line type in percentiles</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>122</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>30</td>
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<td>123</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>133</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>65%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Type II</td>
<td>Second most regular line type in percentiles</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>233</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
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<td>134</td>
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<td></td>
<td>124</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td></td>
<td>244</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>234</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type III</td>
<td>Third most regular line type in percentiles</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>022</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3.1.3B

The four line types of group B: Psalms 5, 17, 35, 86, and 141  
(these psalms contain no shift in direction of address)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>T.3.1.3B</th>
<th>Psalm 5</th>
<th>Psalm 17</th>
<th>Psalm 35</th>
<th>Psalm 86</th>
<th>Psalm 141</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Length of poem</td>
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<td>40 lines</td>
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<td>Type I</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Second most regular line type in percentiles</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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<td>26%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>43%</td>
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<td>Type III</td>
<td>Third most regular line type in percentiles</td>
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<td>012</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>8%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type IV</td>
<td>Least regular line type in percentiles</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>023</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3.1.3C
Line types in percentile for groups A and B

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line Types</th>
<th>Range of Group A (Psalms 54, 55, 56, 57, 59, 64, and 69)</th>
<th>Range of Group B (Psalms 5, 17, 35, 86, and 141)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type I</td>
<td>63-79%</td>
<td>33-55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type II</td>
<td>19-22%</td>
<td>26-44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type III</td>
<td>8-15%</td>
<td>5-11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type IV</td>
<td>4-8%</td>
<td>3-16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in tables T.3.1.3A, T.3.1.3B, and T.3.1.3C, the degree of regularity of four line types of the psalms in the A group are predictable; the numbers are roughly equal to that claimed by HVS. For the B group, all line types are somewhat irregular; yet the order of regularity confirms HVS's claim, i.e., Type I being the most common, Type II is next to most common and so on; the same for the psalms in A group. Comparing the two groups, one notes the significant differences in the rates of occurrences in all four types, most noticeably Types I and Type II. The rate of occurrence in Type I for the psalms in the A group is larger than the rate of occurrence in Type I for the psalms in the B group. Conversely, the rate of occurrence in Type II for the psalms in the A group is smaller than the rate of occurrence in Type II for the psalms in the B group.

The above analyses show that the variations in syntactic descriptions, i.e., line types and rates of occurrences, of the classic Individual Laments do exist between those containing changes in direction of address and those that do not contain such changes. At
the same time, the comparability in line types and rates of occurrences also exists among the psalms within the same group(s).

To explain in more details the variations in syntactic descriptions of the two groups of psalms illustrated in the preceding Table 3.1.3C, the texts of Psalms 54 and 141 are given side by side on the next page; Psalm 54 represents group A psalms and Psalm 141 represents group B. Since the translations and syntactic analyses for these two psalms are already provided in Chapter Two, there is no need to present them here. What will be clearly visible from the texts of these two psalms is the significant difference in the surface structure of the lines of the two psalms. One will note that the lines in Psalm 54 are generally shorter than the lines in Psalm 141. Comparing the two psalms, one also will note that Psalm 54 is composed in a much simpler form; the majority of the lines are one-clause-predicate lines with two to three constituents and two to three words, i.e., simple sentences.

In contrast, the syntactic structures of the lines in Psalm 141 are much more elaborate; the majority of the lines, more than three quarter of the poem, contain two to three clause predicates, three to four constituents, and three to four words, i.e., compound or complex sentences. One will also note that unlike Psalm 54 and many other psalms in the Individual Laments, Psalm 141 does not end with praise or promise of praise. In contrast, Psalm 54 ends with praise.
Psalm 141

יְהוִָּ֣ה קְְּ֭רָאתִיךָ חִּ֣וּשָׁה לִִ֑י
הַאֲזִַ֥ינָה ק֝וֹלִֹּ֗י בְקָרְאִיֽלָּךְ׃

ךָ
תִכִ֤וֹן תְפִלָתִִּ֣֔י קְטִֹּ֣רֶת לְפָנִֶ֑י
מַ֝שְאַַ֥ת כַ֝פַֹּ֗י מִנְחַתֽעָּרֶב׃

שִׁיתִָּ֣ה יְְ֭הוָה שָׁמְרִָּ֣ה לְפִִ֑י
נִ֝צְרָֹּ֗ה עַלֽדַַ֥ל שְפָתָּי׃

אַלֽתַטֽלִי לְדָבֵָּ֪ר׀
רָ֡ע לְהִתְע֘וֹלִֵ֤ל עֲלִילַ֨וֹת׀
בְרֶֹ֗שַׁע אֶתֽאִישִַׁ֥ים פֹּעֲלֵיֽאִָ֑וֶן
וּבַלֽאֶ֝לְחַֹ֗ם בְמַנְעַםֵיהֶּם׃

יֶּהֶלְמֵֵ֨ני צָ֥דִיק׀ חֶ֡סֶד
וְּיוֹכִיחֵֹּ֗נִי שִֶ֣מֶן
אַלֽיָנִִּ֣י רֹאשִִׁ֑י
cַ֥יִעַד וּ֝תְפִלָתִֹּ֗י בְרָעוֹתֵיהֶּם׃

נִשְׁמְטִּוּ בִּידֵיֽסְֶ֭לַע שֹׁפְטֵיהִֶ֑ם
וְשָׁמְעַ֥וּ אֲ֝מָרַֹּ֗י כִִּ֣י נָעֵּמוּ׃

כְִ֤וֹ פֹלִֵ֣חַ וּבֹקִֵּ֣עַ בָאִָ֑רֶץ
נִפְזְרַ֥וּ עֲ֝צָמֵֹּ֗ינוּ לְפִִּ֣י שְׁאּוֹל׃

כִִ֤י אֵלֶַ֨יךָ׀ יְהוִָּ֣ה אֲדֹנִָּ֣י עֵינִָ֑י
cַ֥יִעַד חָ֝סִֹּ֗יתִי אַלֽתְעַַ֥ר נַפְשִּׁי׃

שָׁמְרֵֹּ֗נִי מִִּ֣ידֵי פְַ֭ח יִָּ֣קְשׁוּ לִִ֑י
וּמֹקְשֹּׁ֗וֹת פִֹּ֣עֲלֵי אָּוֶן׃

יִפְלִּ֣וּ בְמַכְמֹרִָּ֣יו רְשָׁעִִ֑ים
יַַ֥חַד אָ֝נֹכִֹּ֗י עַּדֽאֶעֱבּוֹר׃

Psalm 54

אְֱ֭להִים בְשִׁמְךִָ֣ וֹשִׁיעִֵ֑נִי
וּבִגְבוּרָתְךַָ֥ תְדִינֵּנִי׃

אְֱ֭להִים שְׁמִַּ֣ע תְפִלָתִִ֑י
הַ֝אֲזִֹּ֗ינָה לְאִמְרֵיֽפִּי׃

כִִ֤י זָרִַ֨ים קִָ֤מוּ עָלַֹּ֗י
וְְּּ֭עָרִיצִים בִקְשִּׁ֣וּ נַפְשִִׁ֑י
לִ֤א שַָ֨מוּ אֱלהִֵ֖ים לְנֶגְדִָּ֣ם סֶּלָה׃

הִמִֵּ֣ה אְֱ֭להִים עֹז לִֵ֑י
אֲדוֹלָָ֥ת בְּפַקְדֵּיֽהוּ בְּ֝שִׁמֵּיהֶּ֥ם
שָׁמְרֵֹּ֗נִי מִִּ֣ידֵי פְַ֭ח יִָּ֣קְשׁוּ לִִ֑י
וּמֹקְשֹּׁ֗וֹת פִֹּ֣עֲלֵי אָּוֶן׃

כָּלִּיֵּנִי צֶ֥רַף צָ֖דִיק
ורְכֵַ֥ב לְאִמְרֵיֽהוּ
כִֹּ֥א רַבָּ֖ה
כְִ֤וֹ פֹלִֵ֣חַ וּבֹקִֵּ֣עַ בָאִָ֑רֶץ
כִִ֤י מִכָלֽצְָּה הִצִילִָ֑נִי
וּבְאֹיְבַֹּ֗י רָאֲתַָ֥ה עֵינִּי׃
In my corpus of texts, the kingship motif is striking in Psalm 61. This psalm contains the petition for the king and has no petition against the enemies; it also has no lament/complaint motifs. One recalls the gross structure of this psalm as outlined in Chapter Two: a) Summons and petition for help and protection (vv. 2-5), b) Petition for the king and promise of praise (vv. 6-9). Therefore, the classic form-critical Individual Lament genre for this psalm is difficult to accept. It is more accurate to describe this psalm as a petitionary prayer of, or for, a king.\(^\text{222}\) The poetic description of this psalm further supports this claim, as illustrated in Table T.3.1.3E below; the uniqueness of syntactic description of this psalm is apparent:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line Types</th>
<th>Psalms 54, 55, 56, 57, 59, 64, 69</th>
<th>Psalms 5, 17, 35, 86, and 141</th>
<th>Psalm 61</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type I</td>
<td>63-79%</td>
<td>33-53%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type II</td>
<td>19-22%</td>
<td>26-44%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type III</td>
<td>8-15%</td>
<td>5-11%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type IV</td>
<td>4-8%</td>
<td>3-16%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

My syntactic analysis of this psalm shows that in contrast to the predictable line types of both A and B groups, the line types of Psalm 61 are highly irregular. The frequency of its Type I is less than those psalms in both groups. Its Type II frequency is higher than the Type II of both A and B groups. The frequency of Type II of Psalm 61 is higher than its Type I in a 2:1 ratio (60% Type II vs. 30% Type I). It has no Type IV and contains only nine different combinations of constraints out of a possible 35.

\(^{222}\) So Dahood, *Psalms I*, 83-84.
Given below are the texts of Psalm 61 and Psalm 54 for comparison. One will note that more than half of the lines in Psalm 61 are Type II (one to two clause predicates, two to four constituents, and two to four units). As the result, the lines in Psalm 61 are generally longer than the lines in Psalm 54 (the majority of the lines in Psalm 54 are Type I: one clause predicate, two to three constituents, and two to three units). One recalls that the petition for the king in this psalm has set it apart from the rest of the classic Individual Laments under study. To be sure, the difference in the syntactic description rests on this petition for the king paragraph of the psalm (vv. 6-9). The syntax of the lines in this section of the psalm is more elaborate, and the lines are longer (four to five words in a line), i.e., Type II lines.

Psalm 61

Psalm 54
3.2.0 Issues Related to the Classic Individual Laments as a Genre

The second part of this chapter will focus on issues related to the classic form-critical Individual Lament genre for the twenty psalms under study. The first discussion will focus on issues related to the poetical structure of a prayer in light of the findings in the first part of the chapter. The second discussion will compare the psalms under study to the other representative Individual Laments in the Psalter.

3.2.1 Concerning the Poetical Structure of Petitionary Psalms

The theological issues related to the definition of a poetic prayer and their surface prosodic forms are complex.223 In the Traditional Prayer in the Psalms, Aejmelaeus attempted to trace the development of traditional prayers from pre-exilic to post-exilic time. Her observation and assessment of the vocative-imperative-motivation clause pattern employed in the classic Individual Laments deserves some comment. Aejmelaeus writes,

The features which were found to recur, the imperative petitions, the address to Yahweh, and the introduction of expressions of complaint or confidence in Yahweh or the like by employment of the connective כי, seems to constitute a basic pattern common to a great number of individual complaint psalms. This pattern may be understood as a basic element or nucleus of which and around which further forms of prayer could in various ways develop or be developed.224

Aejmelaeus claims that the basic vocative Yhwh-imperative- כי clause pattern is typical of a Hebrew basic mode of expression and points toward an early Israelite traditional mode of expression in prayers, rather than a late poetic construction.

Aejmelaeus suggests calling these psalms traditional prayers. Aejmelaeus’ assertion

224 Aejmelaeus, Traditional, 85.
relates directly to the complex issues concerning the origin of the poetic tradition and the form and content of a traditional poetic prayer. In the following section, I will discuss the latter in my analysis of Psalm 39. Concerning the former, to be clear, the use of the vocative-imperative-ך clause pattern in the Individual Laments does not warrant the early date of origin of those psalms, i.e., pre-exilic; and the vocative-imperative-motivational clause pattern is not the mode of expression typically used in prayers only (cf. Provs 4:1-2b; 23:19-21). The reasons are these:

1. It is difficult to determine whether the original forms of the psalms in question have gone through extensive late editorial reworks or not, i.e., the final form might be the original or very close to it. Consider Psalms 141 and 143, these two psalms contain the vocative Yhwh-imperative pattern; however, many do not consider Psalms 141 and 143 as having pre-exilic origin, neither do scholars claim that these two psalms contain traces of editorial reworking.225

2. Late linguistic markers in the psalms in question can argue against the early date.

3. While the vocative-imperative-motivational clause pattern might be typical in the Psalter, this mode of speech was not used exclusively to address the Deity in poetic prayer (cf. Provs 4:1-2b; 23:19-21).

225 So Broyles, Psalms, 37; as also Terrien, Psalms, 887, 895; and Kraus, Psalms II, 527, 536.
4. The vocative-imperative-motivational clause pattern does not occur only with the vocative Yhwh (the vocative-imperative-motivational clause pattern in the opening lines of Psalms 54-57 employ the vocative Elohim).

However, Aejmelaeus' claims concerning the use of vocative (Yhwh)-imperative combination in the Individual Laments cannot be totally dismissed; as I have shown in Chapter Two, the occurrence of this pattern marks the distinctive mode of speech for many psalms in my corpus of texts, e.g., Psalms 5, 26, 54, and 86.

On a different genre classification suggestion, Craig C. Broyles differentiates two sub-classes within the psalms of lament: 1) in the psalms of plea, the psalmists address God to request divine intervention, and 2) in the psalms of complaint, i.e., the God-lament, the psalmists complain against God. However, one cannot draw a clear line between Broyles' God-lament psalms and petitionary psalms, since petitionary expressions are prevalent, even more prevalent than the God-lament motifs, in the so-called God-lament psalms.

While it is doubtful that one can establish a clearly defined set of criteria differentiating the two classes, a casual reading of the lament psalms can identify those psalms that contain the motif of God-lament and those that do not. Assuming one agrees with Gunkel's Individual Lament genre designation, there are quite a few Individual Laments that do not begin with the vocative and imperative combination in the opening lines. These are Psalms 3, 6, 7, 13, 22, 25, 28, 31, 38, 39, 42, 63, 71, 88, 109, 120, 130, and 142 (hereafter C group for ease of cross reference). Out of this group, a significant

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number of psalms contain complaints against God (Psalms 3, 6, 13, 22, 38, 39, 42, and 88).

In contrast, one notes that with the exception of Psalms 43 and 102, eighteen out of the twenty psalms of my corpus of texts have no God-lament motif. Regarding Psalms 43 and 102, I have discussed the difficulties regarding the genre of Psalms 43 and 102, so there is no need to repeat them here. Therefore, one may claim that in the classic Individual Lament genre, generally those psalms containing the vocative-imperative combination in the opening lines are not God-lament psalms, i.e., having no complaints against God. The opposite is not true, however, since many of the psalms in the C group identified on the preceding paragraph are also not God-lament psalms.

It is therefore more accurate to describe the psalms in my corpus of texts as prayer psalms or prayer songs instead of complaint/lament psalms, for these psalms primarily function as petitions/pleas to God for help. Yet, if these prayers are speeches addressed to God for help, then it also implies that these monologues are directed to God's hearing alone in petition for removing the crisis or lessening the sufferings of the petitioner. What then can one make of the phenomena of the shifts in the direction of addresses in many of the classic Individual Laments? As analyzed in the preceding section, my corpus of sample texts contains five psalms that address the Deity in their entirety (Psalms 5, 17, 35, 86, and 141), and seven psalms have shifts in direct address (Psalms 54, 55, 56, 57, 59, 64, and 69). Also in the preceding section, I have shown that the syntactic structures of the lines of these two groups of psalms are uniformly

227 As also Broyles, Conflict, 35-51; and Kraus, Psalms 1-59, 38-42.
comparable within each group, and that the line types of the two groups have different rates of occurrences. As noted in the structure analyses of the twenty psalms in chapter two, the change in the direction of address often marks a change in mode of speech, i.e., a break in the surface structure of the poem as the structure outlines of Psalms 54, 55, 56, 57, 59, 64, and 69 have shown. These psalms open with vocative phrases naming the Deity as the person to whom the speech is addressed.

However, not only do these psalms directly speak to the Deity using second-person singular verb forms, but they also speak about the Deity using third-person singular verbal forms in many instances. The question is then to whom the statements of “speaking about the Deity” are directed? 228

One logical explanation for such shifting of address from second-person singular to third-person singular with reference to the Deity is that it is a literary phenomenon, i.e., an oblique form of direct address that recurs quite often in biblical Hebrew verse. Another explanation is that the “speaking about the Deity” suggests the presence of human audiences. Some have suggested that the Psalms of Lament were composed for

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continuing use in liturgical and ritual settings, i.e., primarily communal and not individual.\textsuperscript{229}

Further complicating the issues, the change in direction of address does not always involve change from speech directed to God to descriptive speech about God, i.e., shifts from second-person singular to third-person singular verbal forms in reference to the Deity. One example is Psalm 43; this psalm contains a change of subject in the direction of speech. Psalm 43 starts out with the familiar opening lines and progresses through the structure of a prayer psalm addressing the Deity directly, using second-person singular verb forms (Ps 43:1-3). Nonetheless, it changes the direction of address briefly in v. 4, speaking about the Deity in third-person singular forms (an oblique form of direct address?). The direction of address then shifts again in the ending with self-addressed meditation/motivation expressions in v. 5. As printed in the BHS, can one call the entire composition of Psalm 43 a petitionary prayer?

The quick reading of the structural analysis of Psalm 39 given on the next page will further illustrate the complex phenomena of the shift in the direction of address and the difficulty in interpreting every classic Individual Lament as a single poetic composition of petitionary prayer:

I said, “I will guard my ways
That I may not sin with my tongue;
I will keep a muzzle on my mouth
As long as the wicked are in my presence.”

I was silent and still;
I held my peace to no avail;
My distress grew worse,
My heart became hot within me.
While I mused, the fire burned;
Then I spoke with my tongue:
“LORD, let me know my end,
And what is the measure of my days;
Let me know how fleeting my life is.
You have made my days a few handbreadths,
And my lifetime is as nothing in your sight.
Surely everyone stands as a mere breath.  Selah
Surely everyone goes about like a shadow.
Surely for nothing they are in turmoil;
They heap up, and do not know who will gather.

And now, O Lord, what do I wait for?
My hope is in you.
Deliver me from all my transgressions.
Do not make me the scorn of the fool.
I am silent; I do not open my mouth,
For it is you who have done it.
Remove your stroke from me;
I am worn down by the blows of your hand.
“You chastise mortals in punishment for sin,
Consuming like a moth what is dear to them;
surely everyone is a mere breath.  Selah

Hear my prayer, O Lord,
And give ear to my cry;
do not hold your peace at my tears.
For I am your passing guest,
An alien, like all my forebears.
Turn your gaze away from me, that I may smile again,
Before I depart and am no more.”  (NRSV)
Psalm 39 can be outlined as follow:

I. Reflection and meditation (vv. 2-4)

II. Direct speech: Prayer to God (vv. 5-14)
   a) Complaint against God, (contains wisdom motifs, vv. 5-7)
   b) Complaint against God (vv. 8-12)
   c) Summons and general petitions (vv. 13-14)

The structure of Psalm 39 is unique; this psalm addresses God using second-person singular forms throughout vv. 5-12 of the psalm. One notes that, unlike the psalms in my corpus of texts, the familiar pattern of the vocative-imperative-causal clause does not appear at the beginning but at the final paragraph of the poem. There is no commonality in the opening lines in the first half structure of this psalm and the opening lines of the psalms in my corpus of texts.

In this psalm, the opening paragraph is the poet's self-reflection/meditation that begins with the quotation marker אָמַרְתִי. Immediately followed the meditation the psalmist addresses God directly using the quotation marker: דִּבַּרְתִי. The question is then, “Who are the intended audiences in the opening paragraphs of the poem?” The human-Deity direct monologue takes place after v. 4 of the poem. The opening lines of the direct speech, i.e., the complaint against the Deity, vv. 5-7, contain wisdom motifs. The second half of the poem consists of the complaint and the petition mode of speech, which is also in the form of direct speech. Thus, the prayer addressed to God includes only vv. 5-14 of the psalm.
As the above analysis of its structure has shown, Psalm 39 does not have the familiar structures seen in my corpus of texts. The entire poetic composition does not resemble a structure of a petitionary prayer but a composition of self-reflection and prayer. Further, this psalm contains neither the motif of the enemy's oppression, nor petition for the enemy to be punished, nor praise, nor promise of praise. The structure analysis of Psalm 39 further supports the thesis of my dissertation that the structures of the psalms in my corpus of texts are different from those that do have such combinations in the opening lines.

The following examples, given on the next page, will further substantiate the difference in the opening lines between the psalms in my corpus of texts and other psalms in the classic Individual Laments. Instead of the usual vocative-imperative-causal clause pattern in the opening lines, i.e., summons-general petition-motivation clause, Psalms 3, 6, 13, 22, and 38 begin with the vocative-negative prohibitions or vocative-interrogative pattern expressing the complaints against God:
Ps 3:2-3

O Yhwh, how my foes have increased!
Many are rising against me;
Many are saying to me,
“There is no deliverance for him in God.”

Ps 6:2-4

O Yhwh, do not rebuke me in your anger,
Nor discipline me in your wrath.
Be gracious to me, O Yhwh, for I am weak;
O Yhwh, heal me,
For my bones are dismayed.
My soul also is greatly dismayed,
But you, O Yhwh, how long?

Ps 13:2-3

How long, O Yhwh? Will you forget me forever?
How long will you hide your face from me?
How long must I take counsel in my soul?
Sorrow is in my heart all day long.
How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?

Ps 22:2-3

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me;
So far from my deliverance, from the words of my groaning?
O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer;
And by night, and I have no rest.

Ps 38:2-3

O Yhwh, do not rebuke me in your anger,
Or discipline me in your wrath.
For your arrows have sunk into me,
And your hand has come down on me.
3.3 Conclusion

In the preceding section, I have grouped the selected twelve psalms into two separate groups based on the commonalities in modes of speeches and poetic descriptions (Psalms 5, 17, 35, 86, 141 as one group and Psalms 54, 55, 56, 57, 59, 64, and 69 as the other). These commonalities draw a clear line dividing these psalms into two distinctive groups of petitionary prayers. I suggest calling Psalms 54, 55, 56, 57, 59, 64, and 69 as Petitioner- Elohim -Overhearers prayer songs since these psalms have the classic prayer style structures. What further sets these seven shift-in-direction-of-address psalms as a group is the employment of the vocative “Elohim” in the opening line; Elohim is directly addressed in the background presence of the overhearing audiences. These psalms are pleas to God for deliverance from the persecution of enemies (Psalms 56, 57, 59, 64, and 69), for vindication (Psalm 54), for deliverance from a treacherous friend (Psalm 55). Besides the commonality in the opening lines, these seven psalms share other commonalities listed below:

a) They have the basic prayer structure presented in Chapter Two.

b) They begin with a vocative and imperative combination in the opening lines, addressing the Deity directly using the vocative Elohim.

c) Unlike many of the classic form-critical Individual Laments that do not begin with vocative and imperative combinations, they contain no complaint against God.

d) They are considered by many scholars as relatively earlier psalms (they are all in Book II of the Psalter).
e) They contain shifts in direction of address.

f) The rates of occurrence of their line types are predictably consistent and significantly different from Psalms 5, 17, 35, 86, and 141 (these psalms contain no changes in direction of address).

In contrast to Psalms 54, 55, 56, 57, 59, 64, and 69, the opening lines of Psalms 5, 17, 35, 86, and 141 employ the vocatives “Yhwh.” I suggest calling these psalms Petitioner-Yhwh prayer songs since these psalms are also composed in petitionary prayer style but without change in direction of address. These prayer songs are pleas to Yhwh seeking divine deliverances from enemies (Psalms 5, 17, 35, 86), or the evil ones (Psalm 141). These prayer songs share the commonalities given below:

a) They have the basic prayer structure presented in Chapter Two.

b) They begin with the vocative and imperative combination in the opening lines, addressing the Deity using the divine name Yhwh.

c) Unlike many of the classic Individual Laments that do not begin with vocative and imperative combination, they contain no complaint against the Deity.

d) They contain no shift in direction of address, addressing the Deity alone in the entire compositions.

e) The rates of occurrences of their line types are predictably consistent and significantly different from Psalms 26, 54, 55, 56, 57, 59, 64, and 69 (these psalms contain change in direction of address).
Chapter Four

Conclusion

4.0 Introduction

The focus of this chapter will be on summarizing the content of the dissertation and assessing my thesis in light of the discussions in the previous chapters. In this chapter, I will recapitulate important points leading to the claims set forth in this dissertation.

The dissertation claims that O'Connor's Syntactic Description model can be useful in analyzing the structural patterns of the thirty-seven psalms in the Psalter that combine vocative and imperative in the opening lines. Using the Syntactic Description model, the dissertation investigates how such combination operates in a poem, especially as a way of opening a poem, and what effects it might have on the articulation, structure, and theological significance of the poem as a whole.

In Chapter One the dissertation states a two-fold argument: (1) that these thirty-seven psalms, specifically the twenty Individual Laments, have other similar structural features beyond the combination of vocative and imperative in the opening line, and (2) that the contents of these poems are structured differently than those composed without such opening combination of vocative and imperative.

The accuracy and reliability of the Syntactic Description as one important exegetical tool for the lineation, line structure, and gross structure delineation of the poem will be evaluated. I will also summarize the findings concerning the genre classification for the twenty psalms studied and conclude with closing remarks.
4.1 The Survey

In the first chapter, I have attempted to show that the pre-critical and recent studies of the biblical Hebrew verse clearly have not explained the rich and allusively complex literary and theological traditions of biblical poetry of the Psalter in full detail. The very basic question of what makes the text poetry has caused many disagreements and unresolved issues among scholars. One hallmark of biblical verse is the rhythmic structure balance between the lines of the poem, upon which the overall gross structure of the poem is united. While it is clear that this sense of rhythmic balance can be demonstrated through certain descriptive linguistic correspondences and parallelistic phenomena that occur within and between the basic building blocks of the poem, modern scholars have not yet to ascertain the regularity of these linguistic correspondences and their role in the overall structural cohesiveness of the poem.

For many scholars the rhythmic balance can be identified by the sounds of the words; for these scholars the suggestion that poetry is a language of thought and not sounds plays havoc with the ancient oral tradition of the biblical verse. Yet what has been ascertained about the metrical form of the biblical verse is the predominance of unregulated poetic lines, and that this predominance surely has overwhelmed the metrical models with unnecessary textual emendations, erroneous lineation, and incorrect structural delineation that subsequently have prevented the understanding of the poem. Future studies of the meter in biblical Hebrew verse might result in new rhythmic patterns of sounds, stresses, or accents, but for now, the poetry of the Psalter shows no signs of consistency in such systems.
For other scholars, the pre-critical Lowthian synonymous, antithetic, and synthetic parallelism of the bicolon system is the means by which the sense of rhythmic balance is conveyed through the meaning of the two adjacent lines, i.e., semantic parallelism. A modified semantic model that has the potential to replace the Lowthian model is one advanced by James Kugel as mentioned in Chapter One. This model, generally, claims that the meaning conveyed by the two adjacent lines, A and B, are interconnected.

It is well to focus on the meaning, but parallelism in itself has no meaning but is a linguistic phenomenon that can take place in many linguistic features besides semantic correspondences. According to Robert Lowth, the father of semantic parallelism, parallelistic correspondences of one line with another take place also in the form of grammatical construction. Hence, Adele Berlin carried out what Lowth had left unfinished by explaining the parallelistic phenomena of biblical Hebrew verse in a number of linguistic aspects.

However, in Chapter One, I have argued against the idea that parallelism is the hallmark of biblical Hebrew verse, and that Berlin's analysis approaches the poem from the angle of parallelistic phenomena that take place between the two adjacent lines only, i.e., the bicolon, and does not account for the linguistic phenomena that extend beyond the bicolon. Berlin's analysis does not address the syntactic features that form the structural cohesiveness of the poem, and necessarily so, since the focus of her *Dynamic of Biblical Parallelism* was the parallelistic phenomena of the bicala of the poem and not the poem itself.
Second, there are many instances where not one but several linguistic correspondences or parallelistic phenomena take place within a given bicolon. The question is then not in the defining of the types of parallelism but rather which linguistic correspondence or parallelistic phenomenon among those which took place in a given bicolon can serve as the determining criteria in identifying and classifying types of parallelism. Third, Berlin did not address the issue regarding the predominance of parallelism as a phenomenon in biblical Hebrew verse versus prose. Finally, regarding parallelism as the hallmark of biblical Hebrew verse one may ask: what are the function and effect of parallelism with respect to the understanding of the poem?

4.2 Assessment of Syntactic Description regarding Lineation

On the issue of lineation, students of the Old Testament know that the Talmudic scholars in both Babylonian and Palestinian traditions might have based the verse divisions on information drawn from the available manuscripts and on whatever information handed down from oral tradition they could gather.\(^{230}\) The sense of rhythmic structure of the bicolon marked by the Masoretic disjunctive accents and cantillation accentuations might have reflected the way the text was delineated and interpreted in the Talmudic period even before the Masoretic tradition was established.\(^{231}\) However, as mentioned in Chapter One, we have no treatise on the ancient art of biblical verse, and the invention of the Masoretic-Tiberian system is more than a millennium later than the

time the ancient Hebrew psalms were first spoken. As the result, disparities in the
lineation of poetic materials can be seen in modern English translations in many instances
of the texts. The same goes for the modern Hebrew versions BH\textsuperscript{3} and BHS of the MT, as
O'Connor has pointed out in HVS.\textsuperscript{232}

O'Connor's definition of a line was not made up from thin air; it was based on the
assessment of 1,225 lines of the MT where “the vowels letters and word division of the
MT are respected.”\textsuperscript{233} His lineation of Psalms 54, 78, 106, and 107 aligned with the MT's
major disjunctive accents in the majority of the cases.\textsuperscript{234} In my view, what HVS does in
instances where the MT's lineation is dubious, e.g., Ps 17:1-3, is to employ the syntactical
patterns/structures of the lines it has identified from the assessment of 1,225 lines as the
guideline to resolve lineation difficulty (i.e., using the normal pattern to evaluate the
abnormal pattern). From those conventional syntactic patterns/structures of the lines
comes O'Connor's definition of a line described in grammatical terms. With this basic
definition of a line, in instances where the lineation of the lines are difficult to determine
as presented by BHS, one has a grammatical basis to argue against the editorial textual
emendations and proposals that are often found to be metrically motivated (e.g., Ps 5:4;
26:1; 54:8; 102:6, 20).

Thus in this sense, besides Kosmala who came close in this regard, the late
Michael P. O'Connor was the first to advance significantly the definition of the line of
biblical Hebrew verse. I have illustrated in Chapter Two that O'Connor's definition of the

\textsuperscript{232} O'Connor, \textit{HVS}, 167-296.

\textsuperscript{233} O'Connor, \textit{HVS}, 168.

\textsuperscript{234} For O'Connor's analysis of Psalm 54, see \textit{Contour of Biblical Hebrew Verse: An Afterword to Hebrew
Verse Structure} (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1997).
line has proven to be very useful. As a summary, consider again the lineation of Ps 26:1 arranged by the MT and the editors of the BHS:

MT

שָׁפְטִֵ֤נִי יְהוָֹּ֗ה כִּיֽאְֲּ֭נִי בְתֺםִִּ֣י הָלִַ֑כְתִי
וּבַיהוַָ֥ה בָ֝טַֹּ֗חְתִי לִּ֣א אֶמְעָּד׃

BHS

שָׁפְטִֵ֤נִי יְהוָֹּ֗ה     כִּיֽאְֲּ֭נִי בְתֺםִִּ֣י הָלִַ֑כְתִי
וּבַיהוַָ֥ה בָ֝טַֹּ֗חְתִי    לִּ֣א אֶמְעָּד׃

The variation in lineation is apparent in some modern translations; the NIV arranges the verse in four lines; the NASV has it in two lines; and the NRSV scans three lines. Using the constraints of Syntactic Description, one has a grammatical basis of support to scan Ps 26:1 into three lines. As arranged below, the opening lines, i.e., the Summons and General Petition, generally contain one imperative and one vocative in the opening line. Two lines containing two causal clauses, i.e., syntactic dependency of subordination to the core clause, usually follow the opening line. The vocative-imperative-כי clause pattern is typical of biblical Hebrew verse in the Psalter:

שָׁפְטִֵ֤נִי יְהוָֹּ֗ה
כִּיֽאְֲּ֭נִי בְתֺםִִּ֣י הָלִַ֑כְתִי
וּבַיהוַָ֥ה בָ֝טַֹּ֗חְתִי לִּ֣א אֶמְעָּד׃

Vindicate me, O Yhwh,
For I have walked in my integrity;
And in Yhwh I trusted so that I will not be moved.

4.3 The Independence of the Line and Syntactic Ties beyond the Bicolon System

O'Connor also has observed that the linguistic correspondences of the biblical Hebrew verse are not confined to the bicolon system since in many instances the
linguistic phenomena extend beyond the boundary of the adjacent lines. Thus, for O'Connor, the line is the basic building block of the poem.

With respect to the benefit of taking the line as the basic building block of the poem, I have shown the independence of the line in the exegesis and lineation sections in Chapter Two. To summarize the support for this claim, consider again Ps 54:6-9; the MT lineation of these three verses, which I retain, exemplifies such independence of the line as linguistic correspondences extend beyond the bicolon system:

6. נַחֲפֵה אָלֹהִים עַצְר לַיְּךַ Lo, God is a helper for me,
7. לֶשֶׁב הָרָע לְשֹׁרְרִי He returns evil to my foes.
8. בְּסֹמְכֵי נַפְשִׁי׃ In your faithfulness, wipe them out.
9. יָשִׁיב הְָ֭רַע לְשֹׁרְרִי׃ Then by freewill, I will sacrifice to you.
10. כְִּ֑בִנְדָּ֥ה אֶזְבְחָהֽלָ Lo, God is a helper for me,
11. אֱּ֭דוֹנָֹּ֗י בְּסֹמְכֵַ֥י נַפְשִּׁי׃ The Lord is the supporter of my life.
12. אֲ֝דֹנָֹּ֗י בְּסֹמְכֵַ֥י נַפְשִּׁי׃ In your faithfulness, wipe them out.
13. יָשִׁיב הְָ֭רַע לְשֹׁרְרִי׃ Then by freewill, I will sacrifice to you.
14. כִִּּ֣י מִכָלֽצְָ֭רָה הִצִילִָ֑נִי So that my eye gazed upon my enemies.
The advantage of taking the line as the basic poetic building block is noted in vv. 6-7a where linguistic correspondence extends beyond the two lines/bicolon of v. 6 and splits the next two lines in v. 7. These three lines, vv. 6-7a, cannot be separated since line 7a is in apposition to the objects “supporter of my life” and “helper” in lines 6a and 6b. The next five lines, vv. 7b-9b, together form a sub-unit; lines 7b-8a are conditional clauses; line 7b is a request (independent clause, protasis) and lines 8a is the promise to return the favor if the request is granted (dependent clauses, apodosis). Again, the standard bicolon system does not hold in this case as syntactic links uniting the concluding two lines, v. 9a-b, to the preceding line v. 8b. These causal clauses subordinate to the preceding line and serve as the conclusion of the section.

4.4 The Syntactic Constraints

In Chapter Two of the dissertation, I have provided the Syntactic Description of the texts of the twenty Individual Laments. The result of the 737 lines of the twenty psalms of my corpus of texts confirmed HVS’s claims concerning the syntactic constraints in biblical Hebrew verse. All of the lines conformed to the constraints of Syntactic Description; each contains zero to two clause predicators, one to four constituents, and two to five units per line. Using the case of one-clause-predicate lines as an example, my corpus of the twenty psalms consists of 531 one-clause-predicate

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235 Cf. O’Connor, HVS, 131. The three lines in vv. 6-7a are independent clauses; one may argue against O’Connor that the grammatical feature “apposition” does not always constitute the syntactical dependency of the lines.

lines out of the total 737 lines, 72%. Compare this figure to the 71% of the HVS’s corpora of texts; the two ratios are almost equal.

Using O’Connor’s system, in Chapter Three, I have classified the twenty-eight different line structures appeared in my corpus of texts, 737 lines in total, into four line types. What I have confirmed is significant in that the order of regularity of the four line types as claimed in HVS is accurate, i.e., Type I is the most regular and Type II the second most and so on.

4.5 The Problem of Outlining Themes and Major Motifs as Structure Divisions

With respect to structure divisions of the twenty psalms presented in Chapter Two, one notes that a batch, i.e., a poetic paragraph, did not normally fall into the predictable range of number of lines as described in HVS, and that structure breaks did not and cannot be determined by a predetermined number of lines. Why is it so? Because the lengths of the poems are varied, and the changes in modes of speeches and content focuses of the poem are not subject to any rigid rules. Having stated that, what would then be the driving force behind the structure breaks decisions? If it were that the major motifs and themes mark the divisions, then why bother with Syntactic Description? As I have previously stated, the gross structure of any given psalm may be delineated syntactically in conjunction with the literary forms and content focuses, and structural divisions of the psalms based on the motifs and themes alone are often found to be erroneous in instances where clear thematic markers are lacking.

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237 O’Connor, *HVS*, 529.
4.6 The Basic Problem of the Classic Individual Lament as a Genre

Many modern scholars have avoided the classic label “Individual Lament.” The disagreement among scholars in terminology might have been prompted by the disagreement in the interpretations of the contents, forms, and functions of the classic Individual Laments as a genre group, as in the cases of Broyles, Miller, and also Kraus. Perhaps the arguments made by these scholars and others further reinforce the need for genre reclassification. The problem of genre labeling is apparent in the commentaries:

a) Hans J. Kraus: *Prayer Songs Psalms*

b) Craig C. Broyles: *Prayer Psalms of the Individual*

c) Walter Brueggemann: *Psalms of Disorientation*

d) Patrick D. Miller: *Prayers for Help*

e) Erhard S. Gerstenberger: *Individual Complaint*

f) Sigmund Mowinckel: *Personal Psalms of Lamentation*

g) Claus Westermann: *Psalms of Petition*

4.7 Going from Known to Unknown

In Chapter Three, I have eliminated from my corpus of texts the psalms commonly recognized as having distinctive literary forms and contents that set them apart from the rest of the twenty psalms under study. Second, I have pointed out that a number of psalms in my corpus of texts contain changes in direction of address. Third, I have pointed out that the psalms in my corpus of texts are not God-lament psalms except for Psalms 43 and 102. Finally, I have also separated out those psalms having the vocative

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238 These works are cited in note 86.
Yhwh in the opening line from those having the vocative Elohîm in the opening line. Thus, the first task was to select, based on these known commonalities and variations, a set of uniform sample texts from the twenty psalms for the classification of syntactic structures of the lines.

The so-called “Elohistic Psalter,” forty-one psalms (Psalms 42-83), shows a preference for God instead of Yhwh. If one agrees with Gunkel's genre designation, out of these forty-one Elohistic psalms fourteen are Individual Laments (Psalms 42, 43; 51; 54, 55, 56, 57; 59; 61; 63; 64; 69; 70; 71). My corpus of texts includes a significant number of these fourteen Elohistic psalms, i.e., eleven (Psalms 43, 51, 54, 55, 56, 57, 59, 61, 64, 69, and 70).

After I have eliminated those psalms that are commonly recognized as having distinctive literary features that set them apart from the psalms in my corpus of texts, I divided the remaining psalms into two groups. The first group includes Psalms 5, 17, 35, 86, and 141; these five psalms contain no change in direction of address. The second group includes Psalms 54, 55, 56, 57, 59, 64, and 69. On the surface, these seven psalms share these commonalities besides having the vocative-imperative combination in the opening lines:

1) They contain shifts in the direction of address
2) They belong to the collection of Davidic psalms (Psalms 51-65; 68-70)
3) Their opening lines contain the vocative Elohîm in contrast to Psalms 5, 17, 35, 86, and 141; these five psalms begin with vocative Yhwh and contain no change in direction of address.
4) They are not God-lament psalms

These psalms belong together as a group because of these known commonalities. What was not identified was the commonality, if any, in syntactic structures of the lines, i.e., the Line Types, that unite them as a group; also unknown was the variation in syntactic structure of the lines that set them apart from the group of Psalms 5, 17, 35, 86, and 141. Thus, the next step was to analyze the syntactic structure of the lines of these psalms, and the result of the syntactical analyses in Chapter Three has illustrated that there are significant variations in the Line Types between these two groups of psalms.

4.8 The Opening Lines of other Psalms in the Larger Individual Lament Genre

Besides the twenty psalms in corpus of texts, the classic form-critical Individual Lament genre includes Psalms 3, 6, 13, 22, 38, and 39; these psalms contain God-lament motifs. In Chapter Three, I have shown that instead of the usual vocative-imperative-causal clause pattern in the opening lines, Psalms 3, 6, 13, 22, and 38 begin with the vocative-negative prohibitions or vocative-interrogative patterns expressing complaints against God. Also, as shown in the example of Psalm 39, the gross structures of those psalms that do not contain vocative-imperative combinations in the opening lines are different from those in my corpus of texts.

Using Syntactic Description, Chapters Two and Three of the dissertation have demonstrated that these thirty-seven psalms, specifically the twenty Individual Laments, have other similar structural features beyond the opening line. Chapter Three also has shown that the contents of these poems are structured differently than those composed without such an opening combination of vocative and imperative.
With respect to Syntactic Description, the dissertation has illustrated its usefulness in lineation and gross structure divisions. It has also confirmed HVS’s claims concerning the constraint of the lines and the rate of occurrence of various line types. The dissertation also has shown that the twenty classic Individual Laments, more specifically, the representative sample texts of the twelve psalms share other commonalities in structural features beyond the opening line. In addition, as a group, these psalms share the distinctiveness in syntactic description with respect to line types and rates of occurrences.

4.9 Closing Remarks

The dissertation is directed to a two-fold objective besides the thesis: 1) it intends to convince the reader why Syntactic Description is one effective exegetical tool in lineation and structural analyses of the biblical Hebrew verse, and 2) it intends to present the syntactical analyses in support of genre classification. This two-fold objective is achieved without burdening the reader with strange technical terms and teeming numerical data. Thus, the decision to avoiding the HVS's analyses of the weight of the paragraph and the Trope/non-Class I ratios proved correct since the similarity and variation of the syntactic line structures across the texts studied could be identified without using those analyses.

As illustrated in Chapter Three, the two groups of psalms in my corpus of texts contain the commonalities and variations in the direction of speech, in the employment of the Deity names in the opening lines, and most notably in the rate of occurrence of the line types. As my analyses progressed in separating the psalms by the commonality in
the direction of speech, I ended up with two distinctive groups of psalms. The first group includes Psalms 5, 17, 35, 86, and 141, and the second group includes Psalms 54, 55, 56, 57, 59, 64, and 69. The latter group belongs to the Davidic collection, and the former group employs the Divine name Yhwh in the opening lines. As illustrated in the dissertation, there are literary variations in the psalms of David in this study as a corpus of texts besides the titles and superscriptions attached to these psalms.
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230


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